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Reel Deans : The Portrayal of Higher-Education Administrators in American Films

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REEL DEANS: THE PORTRAYAL OF HIGHER-EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS
IN AMERICAN FILMS

by

Jeffrey Todd Hess

A dissertation submitted to the College of Education and Human Services

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Leadership theory routinely focuses on the relationships of leaders within the context of the work environment; however, culture and, specifically, films are a pervasive influence on both individuals and work environments. The literature review revealed that the relationships between higher-education faculty and administrators are strained. A conceptual framework known as the dark side phenomenon identified three dynamics affecting the work between faculty and administration: working relationships, supervisory roles, and the cultural impact. This lead to the research question: How are higher-education administrators portrayed as characters in popular American films?

Data collection began with the selection of American films to study and involved four criteria: release of the film in the United States, inclusion of higher education in the film, a high level of viewership, and the substantial portrayal of a higher-education administrator within the film. The theoretical framework for data collection included Kenneth Burke's (1969) pentadic analysis and parts of George Gerbner's (1998) cultivation analysis.

The data analysis identified that leadership behaviors are portrayed negatively in all but a few instances. Five major themes of negative leadership were identified: serving oneself, expelling undesirables, promoting prestige, finding money, and adhering to rules. Recommendations for leaders in higher education to mitigate the influence of negative film portrayals and suggestions for improving the quality of leadership were offered. Suggestions for further study include how film portrayal of higher-education administrators affects audience members, how the gender of administrators is portrayed in films, and how an institution's name is used in films. The study concludes by

discussing the power of films, the need for media literacy, and the acknowledgement that the dark side of higher-education leadership can be mitigated by thoughtful, positive leadership behaviors.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Higher education faces a new era for leaders to foster high-quality educational experiences for students while adapting to the ever-changing environment of the 21st century. This climate of change requires an organizational culture in which institutions can identify change and adapt as needed (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002). Leaders in higher education face a highly dynamic work environment brought on by a retiring faculty, evolving technology, and an unstable political landscape that continues to restrict funding and increase accountability (Wisniewski, Tips, & Leshnowar, 2007).

Additionally, leaders in higher education continue to face many obstacles in creating an environment of quality instruction (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). To accomplish such goals, leaders must work effectively with faculty to create an open and supportive workplace environment. However, higher-education administrators noted that their relationships with faculty are among the top stressors they encounter in their work (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002), and interactions between administrators and faculty have the ability to become divisive and frustrating.

Leadership theory has routinely focused on the relationships of leaders within the context of the work environment (Kezar, 2004). Culture influences both work environments and the individuals who operate within these work environments. These cultural influences are also evident in higher education.

Understanding the main beliefs communicated within a culture informs both

present and future leaders within higher education (Bulman, 2006). The goal of the present research study was to explore the cultural messages regarding higher-education administrators. Specifically, this research studied the American culture that permeates and influences those who work, learn, and lead in higher education in the United States (Fahri, 1999).

Although there are many strands of leadership that are affected by culture, this study specifically explored the work of higher-education administrators and the way leaders in higher education are portrayed within a culture. This research study sought to find those common portrayals of higher-education administrators. The exploration of the way administrators are perceived is of benefit to colleagues, faculty, and students.

Much may be gained from looking at leadership by way of a narrative lens, and a framework of drama provides rich description of the work of leaders (Starratt, 1993). Popular American films are a pervasive aspect of culture, and they represent the culture's perceptions even as they influence the development of culture. Specifically, the present study sought to understand how higher-education administrators are portrayed in American films.

Statement of the Problem

The need for this research study was determined by the working relationships between higher-education administrators and related constituent groups. Based on research to date, the working relationships between faculty and administrators are strained in even the best of working conditions (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Palm, 2006; Willis, 2010). When faculty and administrators are not able to work collaboratively, administrators are not able to lead effectively and manage their institutions. The strained

relationships between faculty and administration invariably strain all aspects of the learning experience and ultimately harm the opportunities for students to learn and succeed. Similarly, when students feel threatened or uncomfortable expressing their concerns, administrators are not able to meet the needs of their students. These unproductive environments, noted by a lack of trust and communication (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002), are common in higher education and are worthy of exploration, as found in Czech's (2004) critical content analysis.

The strained relationships also affect the longevity of administrators. Of those faculty members who become department chairs, most return to their faculty roles after serving in administrative roles (Gmelch & Schuh, 2004). Furthermore, one in five academic chairs leaves her or his role each year to return to teaching, to retire, or to move into another line of work (Gmelch, 2010). A higher level of turnover results in unstable leadership and invariably affects the quality of academic programs.

An additional reason to explore the portrayals of higher-education administrators is the pending increase in retirements of current administrators over the coming decade (Betts, Urias, Chavez, & Betts, 2009). In the coming years, hundreds of academic leaders will move into retirement and will take with them years of experience and wisdom. Those taking on the new roles will rely heavily on their personal experiences and cultural beliefs that include prejudices and misconceptions (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Having an understanding of common portrayals of an occupation and subsequent prejudices will help future administrators face cultural influences more effectively (Betts, et al., 2009; Land, 2003).

Higher-Education Leadership

From the earliest theories of educational leadership, a common theme supports the need for open communication and trusting relationships (Wisniewski et al., 2007).

Communication is among the most important skill sets an administrator has (Gmelch, 2010; Wisniewski et al., 2007). Early theories of leadership, in which trait leadership dominated, recognizes the need for a human perspective that upholds the importance of trust and effective communication between leaders and subordinates (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

All of the prominent leadership theories to date identify the need for effective working relationships among constituent groups. Specifically, the skills-approach theory, situational leadership theory, contingency leadership theory, leader-member exchange theory, path-goal theory, transactional theory, and transformational theory denote the need for effective working relationships and clear communication in all settings (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996; see also Northouse, 2004). Each of these leadership theories echoes the need for faculty to trust their academic leaders and, reciprocally, for leaders to trust faculty. These trust relationships undergird all effective leadership in higher education (Gmelch, 2010).

Leadership in higher education also requires the creation and support of highly dynamic and communicative working relationships (Gmelch, 2010; Greenstreet, 2010). Academic leaders must discuss potentially volatile issues in a way that does not threaten or limit faculty input (Wheeler, Seagren, & Becker, 2009). The ability for leaders to create a positive working environment where colleagues can empathize, motivate, and trust one another is essential for leaders in higher education to lead their organizations (Wisniewski et al., 2007).

Research Question

The public's perception of higher education may be playing a role in the strained relationships among the constituent groups of faculty, students, and administrators in higher education. These perceptions are part of and formed by our American culture. As a cultural artifact, American films may be generating perceptions within these groups that negatively affect their relationships. According to a poll conducted for American Demographics by the market research firm Audits Surveys Worldwide, 70% of Americans have seen an American film in the last year, as reported in Yang's empirical survey (2006, p. 74). The pervasiveness of American films and their potential effect on the perceptions of higher-education constituent groups and the public at large provides a rationale for closely examining the portrayal of higher-education administrators in films.

In recent years, the term "turning to the dark side" has been repeatedly used to describe moving from a position as a faculty member to a higher-education administrator (Dowdall & Dowdall, 2005, p. c1; see also Dean Dad, 2010; McCarthy, 2003; Palm, 2006; Willis, 2010). The phrase carries a heavily negative connotation, describing moving from a place of goodness to evil. This cultural reference to the *Star Wars* films may be indicative of a deeper cultural message about administrators in higher education. The *Star Wars* reference is one salient example of the way a cultural artifact may be influencing perceptions. Other, less obvious, examples likely influence perceptions about higher-education administrators. To explore other cultural messages of American films, the following research question was posed: How are higher-education administrators portrayed as characters in popular American films?

At the core of this research question was the need to understand the way

American culture portrays and perceives college and university administrators. An understanding of the ways that administrators are portrayed in films is useful in identifying culturally held perceptions that affect the relationships between administrators and others. American films, as cultural artifacts, can offer a significant amount of information to audiences about higher education, and researchers in education benefit from a thorough investigation of the messages that are communicated (Dalton, 1999; Dittus, 2007; Tucciarone, 2007). Scull and Peltier affirmed, “the fact that scholars in other professional areas have found the study of popular movies and their portrayals of interest suggests that educators might want to consider the rationales for similar study” (2007, p. 15).

Definition of Terms

The following list of definitions provides clarity in the use of terms relevant to the present study. Terms that are specific to a pertinent idea or concept within a specific section of this dissertation are identified and discussed within that context.

Higher Education: For the purpose of this study, the term higher education was defined as any type of educational enterprise beyond secondary school that is accredited, provides educational credit, awards degrees, and engages in academic activities. For this study, the term *higher education* included any post-secondary institution and encompassed commuter-type and residential institutions; community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities; private, state-supported, and for-profit entities. In this context, both undergraduate and graduate institutions were considered as part of a definition of *higher education*.

American film: According to the American Film Institute (2011), an American

film is “an English-language motion picture with significant creative and/or financial production elements from the United States using a narrative format that is typically over 60 minutes in length.”

The word *film* was chosen as it best represents the artistic pursuit of the making of motion pictures and the resultant art form that has developed around this process. The term *film* not only represents the finished product that an audience views but also conveys the process of the art form (Bulman, 2006; Elsaesser & Buckland, 2002). Although more common, the term *movie* was not used in this study because it does not denote the wider psychological and sociological impact of the art form that produces and displays motion pictures.

Administrator: An administrator is an individual employed in a position at an institution of higher education whose main role is the management and leadership of the institution. The term comprises many different duties of an administrator in higher education to include, but not be limited to, academic leadership, student affairs work, facility management, fund-raising, budget management, and political responsibilities.

Faculty: The faculty comprise a group of individuals employed at a higher-education institution whose primary role is teaching or instructing students (McCarthy, 2003). This term includes individuals who work full-time and part-time in the role of instructors and those with research and scholarly responsibilities and service obligations. A *faculty member* may be termed in other literature as *professor*, *instructor*, or *teacher*. The term *faculty* also connotes in this research study the concept of a group of individuals involved in scholarship and research as a primary profession with some level of collegiality. For the purpose of this study, the term *faculty* referred to the individuals in

these roles. To support the concept of faculty as a group of individuals, the term *faculty* was used as a plural noun throughout the document to acknowledge the work of individual faculty member within the context of the group. *Faculty member* refers to a specific individual within the faculty.

Culture: The definition of *culture* for the context of this discussion was provided by Hinton (1991), who defined culture as “the part contained in the collective consciousness shared by all members of our media-driven society” (p. 2). Hinton’s definition clarifies the importance of media as they relate to culture and acknowledges that culture is collective in that every member of the culture contributes to the way individuals within the culture judge and value any given component.

Reality: The term *reality* within the context of this discussion refers to the way that the individual perceives her or his world from the “political, economic, theoretical and ideological practices” of a society (Zavarzadeh, 1991, p. 92). This reality is the shared meaning that increases individuals’ understanding of and ability to operate within their surroundings.

Methodology and Selection of Films

In order to explore the portrayal of administrators in American films, a content analysis methodology was deemed appropriate (Czech, 2004; Schwartz, 1963; Tucciarone, 2007; Wolfrom, 2010). The approach to content analysis in the present study combined several theories to extract pertinent data from the selected films. Thus, the content analysis employed the elements of dramatistic theory (Burke, 1969) and parts of cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1998) to explore American films in the broadest possible way. Pentadic analysis (Burke) provided a framework for the exploration of content

within a specific film, while message system analysis (Gerbner) enabled the comparison of content across multiple films. The selection of films followed four criteria: the location of a film's release, a clear relationship of the film to higher education, a high level of viewership for the film, and the substantial portrayal of a higher-education administrator within the film.¹

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 provided a general description of the problem and rationale for the present research study. Chapter 2 presents the literature relevant to the study by first exploring the working relationships among constituent groups in higher education; it then describes how the literature generates a concept of the *dark side phenomenon*. The discussion of the dark side phenomenon is followed by an exploration of the importance of American films and their influence on both the individual and culture, along with a description of the dialectic relationship among films, the individual, and reality. The literature review ends with a survey of current research regarding the portrayal in films of constituent groups in higher education.

The third chapter of the study outlines the methodology employed to analyze the content regarding higher-education administrators in the American films selected. The process of analyzing films combined the dramatistic analysis of Kenneth Burke (1969) and components of message system analysis by George Gerbner (1998) in order both to extract relevant data from the films and then to analyze the data.

Chapter 4 includes an analysis of the data collected through the use of a

¹ The action within the films analyzed is described in present tense to denote the on-going communicative act of films and following established procedures of previous researchers Tucciarone (2004) and Umphlett (1984). Films are cited in the text by their title and date of release and are listed separately at the end of the document.

theoretical framework for content analysis. Hatch's (2002) inductive analysis was the primary theoretical basis for data analysis with support from Spradley's (1979) use of domain in ethnographic analysis. Eisner's educational criticism (1998) also guided data analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the positive and negative leadership qualities found in the portrayals of higher-education administrators in films. The last chapter concludes with a discussion with a discussion of the major themes identified during the data analysis, the power of films, the need for media literacy, and the explanation that the dark side of higher-education leadership can be lessened by thoughtful, positive leadership behaviors.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 1 established the argument that an institution of higher learning demands an interdependent relationship among three major constituent groups. Administrators, faculty, and students must engage, communicate, and effectively manage the process of higher learning (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002). In order to accomplish any level of efficacy in an organization, the constituent groups must establish a level of trust (Buller, 2007). The literature review for the present study provides both a rationale and a background necessary for an informed exploration of American films that may shape the perceptions of viewers.

This review begins with a discussion of the working relationship between administrators and faculty in higher education. The second section presents literature that analyzes the complex interrelationship among individuals, culture, and film. Such literature presents arguments in support of American film's pervasive effect on culture. The review concludes with an analysis of the current literature exploring the portrayal of higher education in American films.

Working Relationships among Constituent Groups in Higher Education

In higher education, the two-pronged goal of faculty is to lead instruction in the classroom and to advance scholarship in their given disciplines (Huber & Hutchings, 2005). Administrators, then, are responsible for leading the operations of the institution (Buller, 2007). Although the goals of faculty and administrators are not completely exclusive of each other, the objectives are often disparate enough to generate conflict

(Palm, 2006). The opposing vantage points often hamper meaningful communication (Dalton, 1999).

Similar to labor relationships between management and the general workforce, a divide in higher education may exist between administrators and faculty (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). This division is due in part to the organizational differences in the type of work and roles of these two groups (Palm, 2006). Further, although administrators are responsible for the general leadership of the institution, they endeavor to maintain an “optimistic view of life” (Palm, 2006, p. 63). This approach to the work of higher education may be in contrast with the approach of faculty who are often expected to question the leadership and decisions of administrators (Olson, 2006) because their decisions have a direct effect on the work and roles of the faculty. Invariably, these two opposing forces of expression can create conflict and tension and lead to an *us versus them* mentality on both sides (Olson, 2006; Thornton, 2005).

Although the chasm between faculty and administrators is due in large part to each group’s unique professional goals, other differences exist in the way each constituent group is hired, employed, and compensated (Ekman, 2010). The divide between faculty and administrators is affected by perceived differences in job security (Fant, 2006; Olson 2006). The function of the faculty tenure processes and multi-year contracts is often at odds with the insecurity of yearly, administrative contracts. In higher education, faculty maintain tenure, whereby they may not be dismissed without cause. In addition, because administrators are responsible for the hiring, firing, and evaluation of faculty, a natural discord exists between an individual who maintains a supervisory role and an employee who is subject to that supervision (Olson, 2006). The disparate salaries

between faculty and administrators may also exacerbate the division. Faculty often feel undervalued when higher-education administrators receive inordinately higher salaries (Betts et al., 2009; Olson, 2006).

“The Dark Side” as a Term for Administration

To describe and label the divide between administrators and faculty, a variety of authors have coined the phrase “turning to the dark side” to refer to the perceived differences that exist between these two constituent groups; these differences become evident when a faculty member transitions into an administrative role (Dowdall & Dowdall, 2005, p. c1; see also Dean Dad, 2010; McCarthy, 2003; Olson, 2006; Palm, 2006; Willis, 2010). McCarthy (2003), author of *Learning on the Job: Moving from Faculty to Administration*, described his own transition from being a faculty member to an administrator. He repeatedly heard the term “turning to the dark side” (p. 39) to identify the negative depiction of administration and described the resentment of his faculty colleagues. Thus, the phrase “the dark side” is a polarizing idiom that encourages an “us versus them rhetoric” (Olson, 2006, p. 2). Regardless of the context of a given educational institution, the idea of “turning to the dark side” has become synonymous with administration and educational leadership (Thornton, 2005). This idea also suggests that anyone who moves into such a role has “sold out” his or her academic integrity (Thornton, 2005, p. 2).

An analysis of the literature demonstrates that the roles and responsibilities of administrators are often the basis for the use of the phrase, “the dark side.” When administrators manage budgets, divide resources, and enforce the rules and regulations of their institutions, they are often perceived as opposing the work of faculty and the needs

of students (Olson, 2006). Running an institution of higher learning requires policy development and procedural work, and administrators may be perceived as turning to the “dark side” (p. 3) in reference to those decisions that faculty perceive as unjust or nefarious (Thornton, 2005).

Definition of the Dark Side Phenomenon

The previous section established that a discord may exist between administrators and faculty in higher education and outlined the common reasons for these strained working relationships. Based on this phenomenon, a conceptual framework reflects the unique qualities and dimensions of the administrator and faculty experiences (see Figure 1).

The term “the dark side” has become a common expression in American culture with the appearance of six American films called *Star Wars*. The original *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* film, released in 1977, was a “sci-fi western” centered on a good-versus-evil plotline that takes place in outer space to decide control of the galaxy (Schneider, 2008, p. 616; Thornton, 2005). The *Star Wars* films portray a universal conflict between good versus evil. The “force” is a mystical, magical, and omnipresent entity that becomes a spiritual focus point in the films. Characters in the *Star Wars* films either choose to use the force for good or inhabited the dark side of the force that uses hatred and negative emotions for power (Chopra, Ford, & Williamson, 2010; Greene, 2007).

The Dark Side Phenomenon

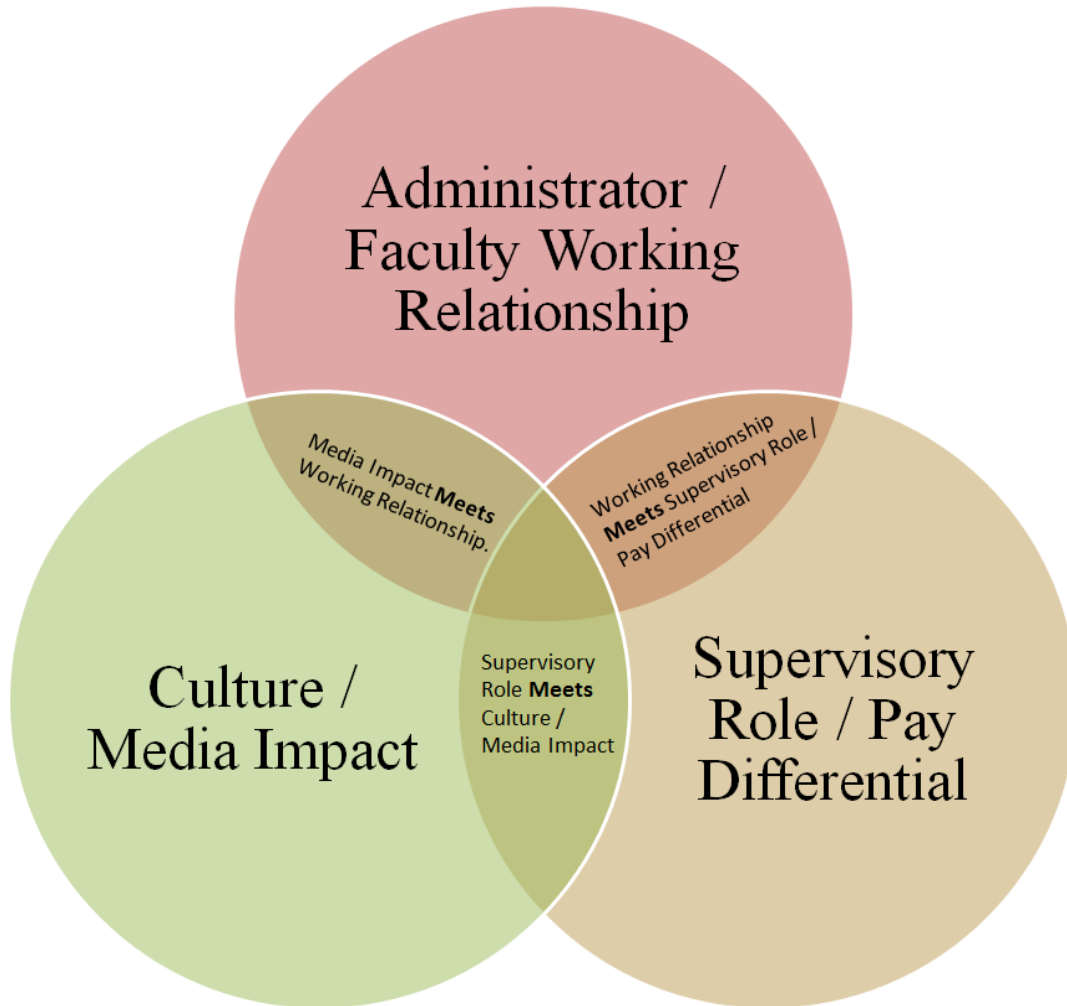


Figure 1. This diagram illustrates the basis of the dark side phenomenon and includes three primary sections: relationships, pay differential, and media impact.

Based on their popularity, the *Star Wars* film series has had a powerful and significant effect on the language, culture, and perceptions of people throughout the world. The original *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977) film cost \$11 million and has returned earnings of over \$490 million, one of the biggest box office revenue successes of all time (Craddock, 2008). Up to 2008, the six *Star Wars* films had earned

collectively over \$5.51 billion at the box office (Nash Information Services, n.d.). The characters of Darth Vader, Obi Wan Kenobi, and Luke Skywalker have become common referents in everyday life (Schneider, 2008). As an example of the use of the *Star Wars* reference in American culture, President Ronald Reagan's 1980s plan for a strategic defense initiative was given the nickname *Star Wars* (Smith, 1999). The films even have their own Smithsonian museum exhibit (Schneider, 2008).

The first film, *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977), spawned two sequels, *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi* (1983). In 1999, George Lucas produced and released three additional films that served as *pre-quels*, with the plot-line action taking place before the time when the original *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* film begins. These three films, *The Star Wars Episode I: Phantom Menace* (1999), *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones* (2002), and *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of The Sith* (2005), center on the early life of the character Anakin Skywalker and the events that led him to become the evil ruler of the galaxy, Darth Vader, by "turning to the dark side" of the force. Thus, the *Star Wars* franchise originated and popularized the term "the dark side" and the phrase "turning to the dark side" that have become frequently used in American culture to refer to the presence of evil (Stone, 2000).

As Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers (1988) noted, Darth Vader is an evil character who lives as a machine to control the galaxy and to uphold the empire. The *Star Wars* films introduced audiences to an evil leader named Darth Vader who lives his spiritual life on "the dark side." Darth Vader is an American film character shielded in a black, mechanical suit and cape. After several life-threatening injuries sustained in

combat, Vader requires machines to help him breathe. The machines help to keep Darth Vader alive while giving him the ability to control and use the powerful supernatural power referred to as “the dark side of the force.” The *Star Wars* films depict Darth Vader as an individual who is motivated to seek power to become ruler of the universe. In his determination to become a powerful leader, Darth Vader repeatedly abuses himself, the ones he loves, and others who both aid or oppose him (Stone, 2000).

This discussion of the literature indicates that references to “the dark side” exist in both popular American culture and in more scholarly work (Dowdall & Dowdall, 2005, p. c1; see also Dean Dad, 2010; McCarthy, 2003; Olson, 2006; Palm, 2006; Willis, 2010). Thus, a conceptual model of the dark side can be generated from the literature where the phrase “turning to the dark side” expresses the divide between faculty and administration. The characteristics of the dark side phenomenon begin with the divided relationships between administration and faculty (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999) and include the cultural impact from popular media and the effects of differences in roles and pay between the groups. The interaction of these components in this phenomenon is illustrated in Figure 1.

As Figure 1 shows, there are three basic components that foster the dark side phenomenon. The working relationships between administrators and faculty combine with the differential in work hours and pay and the influence of media to create three powerful aspects that converge in higher education and create a strained environment between administrators and faculty.

The working relationships are the first contributing factor to the dark side phenomenon. The difference in pay also inhibits strong collaboration and

communication (Dowdall & Dowdall, 2005), as faculty perceive a difference in the rate of pay between faculty and administrators. Add to this the impact of messages from culture, and a strong phenomenon occurs that limits effective relationships of collaboration and trust between administrators and faculty. The concept of the dark side phenomenon provides a clear identifier for the combination of circumstances described above. This phenomenon is the foundation for the present study. Through exploring the portrayal of administrators, a better understanding of the messages that contribute to the dark side phenomenon can be identified and understood.

Education's Neglect of Film

Of the three major aspects of the dark side phenomenon depicted in Figure 1, the area of cultural and media impact on education have been studied least. Although the topic of film has been researched to some extent, educational research is not giving American film the time and energy in proportion to the impact that the medium has (Hinton, 1991; Smith 1999). The inherent value in understanding the dynamics of American film and the way it can affect education is a significant reason that more study is needed. If educators can have a better understanding of the way film is affecting individuals and culture, it can use the medium to support education and cultivate positive and helpful messages (Smith, 1999). In fact, Smith's (1999) textual analysis led to the conclusion that education research has almost completely ignored American films as an important data set and "dismissed the popular images" (p. 64). Specifically, American film, as a data source, offers a substantial amount of data to analyze, as identified in Schwartz's (1963) content analysis. Dalton (1999), Dittus (2007), and Tucciarone (2007) recognized the power of American films and urged administrators and educational

leaders to seek out the messages and investigate the medium because it provides administrators, faculty, and students a rich data source for learning. American films offer a substantial amount of information to audiences about higher education, and researchers in education benefit from a thorough investigation of the messages that are communicated to them.

Other professional areas have taken the opportunity to look at American films as a resource for data and better understanding of cultural changes. Lawyers, chief executive officers, religious leaders, librarians, philanthropists, and other professional groups have found the means to dissect films in a way that has brought a greater understanding of how their professions are viewed by each of their constituent groups (Kauffman, 2011; Lee, 2004; Rudolph, 2008; Scull & Peltier, 2007). For these professions, American films served as a psychological mirror to observe and understand the way reality in their fields is portrayed to others. Scull and Peltier acknowledged that “scholars in other professional areas have found the study of popular movies and their portrayals of interest” (2007, p. 15). Thus, the time and attention focused on the messages conveyed in American films is valuable in creating a better understanding of the way education is viewed in popular culture (Hinton, 1991).

Three relationships among constituent groups have been identified so far in this literature review: the relationship between students and administrators, the relationship between faculty and administrators, and the relationship between the general film-viewing public and higher education. Of these, the most important relationship within the context of higher education is the one between administrators and faculty. A divisive relationship between administration and faculty invariably limits communication, stifles

trust, and squelches creativity and innovation (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). These factors ultimately limit the potential success of higher education, and, thus, students will suffer (Buller, 2007; Wisniewski et al., 2007).

The potential downfalls of poor working relationships among constituent groups support the need for continued research in this field. In an attempt to understand the origins of this dark side phenomenon, an analysis of the cultural pervasiveness and impact of film follows.

Prevalence of Film

More so than any other art form, film has a wide reach (Fahri, 1999). American films are the most common and widespread of media. They have the “ability to mold, shape, and direct popular beliefs and attitudes” (Hinton, 1991, p. 2) because films are so widely seen. Thus, American films have a great influence on individuals because so many individuals see so many films.

According to a poll conducted in 2002 for American Demographics by the market research firm Audits Surveys Worldwide, 70% of Americans have seen an American film (Yang, 2006, p. 74). For 2011, the total box office gross in the United States was \$10,195,824,638, generated from the sale of 1,280,882,490 tickets for films in theaters in the United States (Nash Information Services, n.d.). The one and a quarter billion visits by individuals to see an American film dwarf any other content-laden medium or art form.

There is no indication that the popularity and, thus, the impact of films will diminish soon. In 2008, the domestic box office receipts reached \$9.79 billion, which represented a 1.7% gain from the previous year and the highest total in recorded history,

according to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA, 2008). Domestic box office totals grew, and viewership increased 6.8% over the previous five years (MPAA, 2008). Americans like to see films, and the number of visits they make to see films has continued to grow.

The popularity of films is not restricted to metropolitan communities. The social and economic reach of American films is extensive. There are over 40,000 film screens in the United States (MPAA, 2008). These film theaters draw more people than all of the theme parks and major U.S. sports venues combined (MPAA, 2010). The filmmaking industry is comprised of 2.5 million creative professionals who work in all 50 of the United States (MPAA, 2008). “Film is extremely popular and extremely accessible” (Russell, 2009, p. 2), and this accessibility includes members of higher-education constituent groups.

Americans also see films on a frequent basis. In 2007, the average American went to the theater between 6 and 8.5 times (MPAA, 2008). Thus, American films are widely and repeatedly viewed by Americans. Due to their vast viewership, American films cut across all social and economic levels.

Film’s Varied Outlets

In addition to audiences physically going to see films in theaters, a variety of technologies exist to watch films almost anywhere. As a result, American films are widely available in a variety of viewing formats for audiences in addition to theater screenings. According to a CBS News Poll reported on CBS Sunday Morning (Morrison, 2011), 74% of Americans prefer to watch films at home. Today, audiences can view films in their homes through over-the-air or terrestrial digital television signals; satellite

distribution; cable distribution; Blu-ray, digital versatile disc (DVD) or video home system (VHS) cassette rental or purchases; as well as through the streaming digital video provided by broadband Internet connections (Stelter, 2010). Even now, cellular telephone companies are beginning to use their high speed data networks to distribute films to audiences (Hope, 2010).

Digital versatile discs (DVDs) and Blu-ray discs are the principal formats for purchasing and renting films for viewing in the home. Approximately a third of all households in the United States rent a film between 1 to 3 times per month (Yang, 2006). Over half of U.S. households rent a film at least every two to three months. This form of distribution represents a significant audience for American films.

But even renting DVDs is becoming an antiquated means of securing and watching films. Video streaming from the Internet is becoming a common way to deliver films to households (Stelter, 2010). Services such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Video On Demand make it possible for an individual to rent films and watch them instantly on televisions or computers using the Internet to deliver the content. In 2009, 20 million U.S. households watched films that were streamed online through Internet broadband connections (Smith, 2009). The increased bandwidth of Internet servers quickly delivers full-length films to computers, *set-top* boxes through cable descramblers, digital video recorders, Blu-ray disc players, and late-model televisions (Hope, 2010). The “reach of film” has increased dramatically since the 1980s when video cassette recorders and players were first introduced (Fahri, 1999, p. 157).

Even though the price of a ticket to watch a film in a theater has increased substantially in recent years, technology is countering the ticket-cost inflation with the

delivery of films in convenient and inexpensive ways and is shifting the way individuals see films (Barnes, 2009). Those who cannot afford to go to a theater will wait for the DVD release. An individual can rent a standard DVD from a Redbox rental machine in her or his neighborhood for only \$1 a day. As of December 2009, over 22,000 Redbox machines were in operation across the United States (Barnes, 2009).

The economic and cultural impact of film will continue to grow as technology finds ways to make film content even more readily available and affordable to all audiences. The ways that viewers are able to watch films has increased with the advances of technology. This trend will likely continue as broadband-connected devices continue to proliferate in number, speed, and accessibility.

Young Film Audiences

American films also attract a young audience and this attraction makes the impact of the films more consequential to an important constituent group of higher education—the college-age student. In addition, some of these young audience members will find careers in higher education as faculty or administrators, and they will carry the messages of American films with them into their working relationships. Young Americans are attracted to various media including television, radio, the Internet, and films. In fact, 6 out of 10 frequent filmgoers are between the ages of 18 and 20, the prime age for traditional students to attend college (Yang, 2006, p. 75).

Young people are the primary group who are both going to college and seeing films; thus, higher education and the film industry share the same young audience. From 1998 to 2002, the 12 to 29 age group made up 31% of the total filmgoer population but consisted of 50% of all film admissions (MPAA, 2003a, as quoted in Yang, 2006, p. 75).

Teens and college-age students still dominate the general film-going public. In 2007, there were 48 million teen and college-age filmgoers, 47 million 25 to 39 year-old filmgoers, and 79 million filmgoers 40 and older (MPAA, 2008). Not only do young Americans make up a large proportion of the film viewing audience, they also see films more frequently because filmgoers between the ages of 12 and 24 years of age make up 41% of individuals who go to see a film at least once a month (MPAA, 2008).

Considering that these young filmgoers also have a limited amount of life experience, the effect of a film's message is even more powerful. Each young film attendee has much less life experience to juxtapose to the portrayal in films; thus, a film depiction can become a much more powerful creator of reality for young audiences.

Rationale to Study American Films

The rationale for scholars to study popular films is built on the fact that American films are ubiquitous. American films are pervasive in American culture and continue to have a wide-spread effect on American audiences (Hinton, 1991). American films also provide both a powerful insight into the thinking, values, and cultural expectations of a group of people, as well as communicate all of those cultural aspects to members of the community in which they reside. American films represent and convey "values, sentiments, and assumptions to all members of society" (Bulman, 2006, p. 8). Therefore, when American view films a half billion times in a given year, it is clear that films have a powerful effect, with the ability to shape and mold the attitudes, values, and beliefs of those who view them. American films also have the ability to explain the world around them and give audiences powerful notions of the way the world operates (Scull & Peltier, 2007). Films show Americans a particular reality and create their own explanations of

that reality (Hinton, 1991; Scull & Peltier, 2007).

Through the exploration of American films, an opportunity exists to have both a better understanding of American culture and a better understanding of higher-education leadership (Keroes, 1999). In a very real way, American films serve as a rich bed of individual and cultural data at the time and point when a film is made and released, as found in Reynolds's discourse analysis (2007). Films can help to not only explain the reality of the current world but also that of the past.

So, why study films as opposed to any other cultural media or artifacts to get a better understanding of higher education? The answer to this question is found in the pervasiveness of films. Simply put, films are, in a collective sense, everywhere. As illustrated by the statistics cited above, the number of films and the number of Americans who see films are significant (Yang, 2006). American films not only pervade our cultural understandings but also are a very real part of the way we think and operate in our everyday lives (Scull & Peltier, 2007). This fact is illustrated in the pervasive use of film quotations. Any individual who has ever quoted a popular American film line has been influenced by an American film. In casual conversation, people are likely to hear a friend or colleague quote a line from a film, for example, "I'm going to make him an offer he can't refuse" from *The Godfather* (1972).

Tucciarone's (2007) content analysis found that American films are highly visible and effective forms of transmitting information to American audiences. Films, through moving pictures, create both a mental and emotional connection of the material with the audience (Hinton, 1991). These images and sounds are also not limited to the audience's current base of knowledge. Much of the learning in a film by an audience is new

information (Tucciarone, 2007). Thus, an audience that has not otherwise been exposed to higher education begins to receive messages and values by watching a film about higher education. American films then, have the ability to shape and mold (Lee, 2004) the way audience members think and perceive the world of higher education, as found in Farber, Provenzo, and Holm's (1994) content analysis.

The Hollywood Curriculum

At this point, the literature review has outlined the popularity and thus the pervasiveness of American films. Films, therefore, have the potential to affect the individual and the culture at large. Visual anthropology, film analysis and criticism, and literary and rhetorical criticism are fields that have contributed to the research on the way films affect culture and the individual. However, the conceptual lens of curriculum can explain the role of films as a means by which viewers learn about their world. Because American films convey information to an audience, this medium operates as a type of curriculum (Alexander, Lenahan, & Pavlov, 2005; Clemens & Wolf, 1999; Dalton, 1999; Gerbner & Morgan, 2002; Russell, 2009; Scull & Peltier, 2007).

In the process of making and distributing films, a *Hollywood curriculum* is created and disseminated (Dalton, 1999). This curriculum conveys both intended and unintended messages to American audiences through both conscious and unconscious channels (Dalton, 1999; Ferro, 1988; Quart & Auster, 2002). Eisner (1998) noted Dewey's assertion that we learn from art. In a sense, going to see films is much like going to school. We learn from the films in the same way we learn from instruction (Bulman, 2006; Clemens & Wolff, 1999). Elliott, Kelly and Byrd's (1992, p. 28) survey found that 68% of high-school students accept information in a film as true regardless of

factual basis. From an instructional frame, films teach an individual or audience the way to think, feel, and place value (Reynolds, 2007; Yang, 2006).

Mary Dalton's study of films (1999) built an analysis regarding the influence of American film under the conceptual framework of a Hollywood curriculum. The Hollywood curriculum explains the way films operate as a curriculum to educate those who view them. Millions of films viewed each year can therefore create a powerful curriculum for educating Americans.

Education's Use of Film as Curriculum

The Hollywood curriculum represents a theoretical way of looking at the instructional power of American films and the way films educate. Another argument that supports the conceptual framework of the Hollywood curriculum is the use of American films within every type of classroom as a part of or supplement to the curriculum. Films are widely used in every level of education to convey and demonstrate ideas (Barlow, 2010; Kauffman, 2011). Alexander et al. (2005) studied the use of films as curriculum in the fields of medicine and the social sciences. The term *cinemeducation* is used to refer to the use of films to instruct within an educational setting in these disciplines. In addition, leadership (Graham, Ackermann, & Maxwell, 2004), management (Clemens & Wolff, 1999; Seglin, 2001), theology (Stone, 2000), and library sciences (Rudolph, 2008) disciplines incorporate films as a curriculum for meaningful learning. Because films are worthy of inclusion in instruction, they are inherently educational and, thus, a form of curriculum.

Film's Reflection of Reality

At this point, the literature review has established that American films act as a

form of curriculum, conveying content to an audience. However, this relationship is neither linear nor static. The complex relationship of American films with individuals and culture includes the way films reflect reality and the way films shape the reality of individuals. As defined in Chapter 1, the term *reality* refers to the way in which the individual perceives her or his world. Individuals use reality to create understandings of their surroundings (Elliott et al., 1992; Ferro, 1988; Hinton, 1991; Smith, 1999; Zavarzadeh, 1991) and share those understandings with others.

Film's Creation of Reality

In contrast to film's reflection of reality, American films simultaneously communicate ideas and values that impact an audience. Films create a reality for Americans within which they can experience the world (Brodie et al., 2001; Bulman, 2006; Czech, 2004; Elliott et al., 1992; Fahri, 1999; Farber et al., 1994; Ferro, 1988; Reynolds, 2007; Schwartz, 1963; Smith, 1999; Zavarzadeh, 1991). By use of pervasive images, American films create a reality for and share a reality with an audience. The way audiences perceive the world is constructed based on their collective knowledge and experiences. Films add to an audience's view of reality by providing extremely explicit descriptions of people and events, as Zavarzadeh found in his political research of films (1991). The popularity of American films exacerbates this effect (Reynolds, 2007). When an audience member views a film, he or she is taking in the content of the film and considering it as a reality. For example, when an audience member watches *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), she or he is learning about the workings within a spaceship during a lunar mission. For only a few individuals, those who have actually experienced a lunar mission firsthand, this depiction reflects a reality they know. For the rest of the

American audience, the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* constructs a reality that they may choose to believe or not because they do not have any other reality for comparison.

The reality created by the audience is based on the content of the film and may or not have a factual basis. Films may show factual information, but like any act of communication, many variables may change the perception of the information (Zavarzadeh, 1991). For example, a documentary film will present factual information (Schwartz, 1963). However, the content can be constructed in a way to convey unique values and attitudes. Regardless of whether the content of the film is fictional or factual, the reality created is a separate entity. Thus, both fictional and factually based films create realities that operate independently of the source material and are worthy of study.

Over time, the accepted content will generate a very powerful set of messages for audiences who repeatedly watch films. However, not all films' content is taken as an accepted reality by audiences (Farber et al., 1994; Ferro, 1988). Individuals will judge the value of a film's content and accept or reject the information presented. This "accumulated residue" of a film's meanings are either affirmed or denied by an audience (Zavarzadeh, 1991, p. 95).

The Cycle of Film and Reality

The literature review has established a relationship between American films and an audience's perception of reality. Simultaneously, American films both reflect and create reality. Therefore, within the context of American films, a transactional relationship occurs between American films and reality (Quart & Auster, 2002). Each feeds the other and reflects the other. Similarly, American films, individuals, and, to a larger extent, American culture itself relate and interrelate in complex and significant

ways (Smith, 1999).

Films have a two-fold relationship with reality. In one direction, American films reflect the reality around them (Bulman, 2006; Lee, 2004; Nichols, 1981; Perez, 2000; Reynolds, 2007; Smith, 1999; Umphlett, 1984). In the other direction, American films create a reality for the audience, as found in the empirical survey by Brodie et al. (2001) and by other researchers (Elliott et al., 1992; Fahri, 1999; Ferro, 1988; Smith, 1999; Zavarzadeh, 1991).

There are substantial data to explain the interrelationship between reality and the three main components of this discussion: film, culture, and the individual. Reality is the fundamental way that each entity sees the world (Zavarzadeh, 1991). For the purposes of the present study, reality is embedded within film, the individual, and culture. The individual, a culture, and a particular film also create realities. Figure 2 illustrates the dynamic relationships among films, culture, and individuals within the context of reality.

Film's Effect on the Individual

First, films affect the individual in specific and powerful ways. Films affect an individual's attitudes and beliefs (Bulman, 2006; Clemens & Wolff, 1999; Elliott et al., 1992; Hinton, 1991; Keroes, 2005; Sweeney, 2006). Films even have the ability to change the long-held beliefs of an audience (Fahri, 1999; Hinton, 1991). For example, films help individuals make sense of their lives in a very personal and graphic way and help individuals make sense of their complex and confusing worlds by using simple stories, as Bulman's 2006 sociological study described. The visual and auditory parts of films can be so powerful that an individual's personal experiences can be outweighed by the messages of popular American films (Gerbner & Morgan, 2002; Hinton, 1991; Reed,

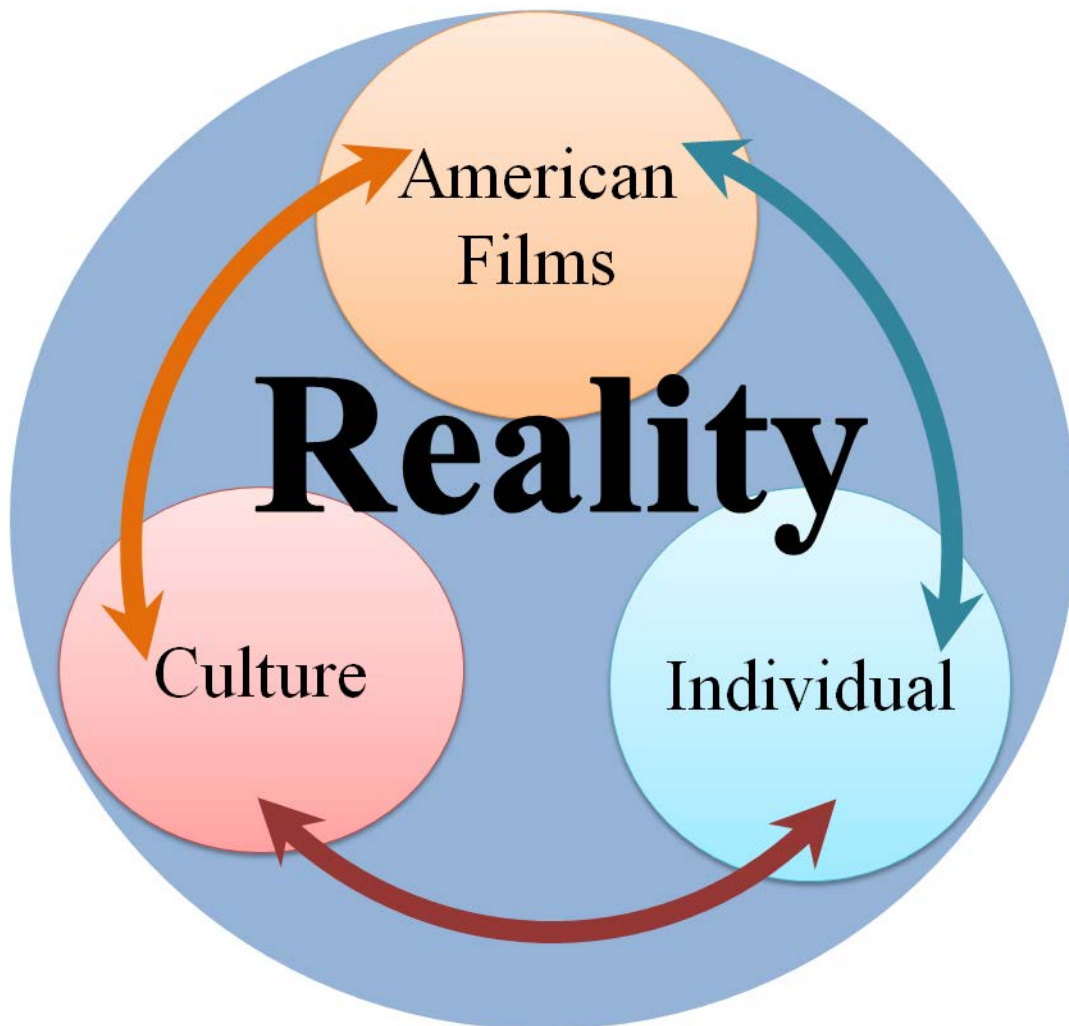


Figure 2. The relationships among American films, culture, and individuals embedded within reality.

1989).

Film's Effect on Culture

As defined in Chapter 1, culture in the context of the present study is “the part contained in the collective consciousness shared by all members of our media-driven society” (Hinton, 1991, p. 2). In Hinton’s ontological analysis and definition of culture, the collective consciousness of individuals is shared. Thus, the individuals who view films live and relate to each other within a culture. Film simultaneously affects both the

individual and the wider community within which the individual lives. American films are part of our culture as they are a pervasive artifact and experience. Not only are American films a part of our culture (Sweeney, 2006), films shape and create the culture within which the American audience operates. The collective consciousness involves the values, feelings, and beliefs of all individuals within the specific culture. In many ways, the culture is a representation of the individual's reality.

American films substantially impact American culture (Hinton, 1991; see also Brodie et al., 2001; Bulman, 2006; Farber et al., 1994; Keroes, 1999; Smith 1999; Somers et al., 2006; Zavarzadeh, 1991). Culture draws meaning from films to create an “ideological investment” by which the culture collects ideas and thoughts as a cumulative effect (Tucciarone, 2007; Zavarzadeh, 1991, p. 1). Thus, films greatly contribute to the way a culture values and perceives the world (Czech, 2004) and, as a cultural form, represent a “real power” to affect culture (Elsaesser & Buckland, 2002, p. 4).

The cultural impact of film can be both positive and negative (Hinton, 1991; Smith, 1999). For example, the film *Philadelphia* (1993) had a positive effect on culture by following the slow and painful death of the protagonist of the film and thus helping Americans see and understand the progression and pain of HIV and AIDS (Quart & Auster, 2002). A negative example of a film's impact on culture is the 1915 film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) that heightened and perpetuated racial stereotypes (Perez, 2000). Regardless of political stance or moral belief, films have a way of showing audience members both the world as they want it to exist and a world that is not as appealing (Smith, 1999). This power of film serves not only to reflect the culture and to convey values and beliefs, but also to suggest a different culture in which to live. In either case,

the audience has the ability to view the film, discern the reality presented, and learn from the experience.

Up to this point, an argument has been made that film has an effect on both the individual and the culture. As illustrated in Figure 2, the components of American films, the individual, and culture within constructed realities can be combined to show the dialectic relationships within a conceptual model. The relationships among American films, culture, and the individual are interconnected and dynamic. As meaning is shared and each component affects the other, film, culture, and the individual are constantly being affected and are affecting each other within the context of reality (Dalton, 1999).

Film's Indirect Link to Individuals

Even though a connection between films, individuals, and culture can be supported, a direct causal link between a film and the actions of individuals cannot be drawn (Quart & Auster, 2002). No direct causation exists between the content of a film and an individual's or culture's behavior or thought (Hinton, 1991; Quart & Auster, 2002). Films do not expressly determine social values or political beliefs because multiple factors will influence the way individuals think and behave. Thus, although the literature has outlined a relationship among the values, attitudes, and thoughts of the American audience and films, the influence is shaped by a complex environment with a variety of variables (Schwartz, 1963). The effect of films on the thinking and behavior of an audience is based on repeated viewings of a variety of films over years and is augmented by many variables. The goal of this literature review has not been to demonstrate a direct cause-effect relationship but to show the substantial influence that American films have on both the individual and American culture. Simply put, films do

have an impact on the way individuals and cultures think and behave (Bulman, 2006, Clemens & Wolff, 1999; Elliott et al., 1992; Fahri, 1999; Keroes, 2005; Sweeney, 2006). Films even have the ability to change the long-held beliefs of an audience.

Films as Historical Artifacts

In addition to the cultural and individual impact of American films, there is also an important historical perspective provided by films. Films provide significant historical data for the last 100 years (Oliker, 1993; Quart & Auster, 2002; Williams, 2010; Zavarzadeh, 1991). The depictions of higher education within films from different time periods serve as a historical sample by which the cultural norms and values can be viewed and analyzed (Ferro, 1988; Quart & Auster, 2002). As a result, American films are beneficial to research because of their historical contexts. Thousands of American films have been released over the last 100 years, and each film offers a unique data source for the time period in which it was filmed. In addition to gaining a better understanding of the shared reality of individuals, a film's ability to transcend time affirms the "staying power" (Tucciarone, 2007, p. 844) of the medium and provides an additional data source for historical analysis.

The historical context of the production of films illustrates the strong relationship between film and reality. As reality shifts within the context of time, so does the American film. The film and the reality of the film that are portrayed are time-bound. American film is frozen within a specific time because the actual images and audio of a film do not change in any significant way as time moves on (Zavarzadeh, 1991). A film produced and shown in 1920 will have the same exact visual and auditory parts if shown today. The same actors, cinematic components, dialogue, and curriculum are still

present. In a sense, the reality of the moment of the film is held, captured, and preserved within the context of the film (Ferro, 1988). The content of films becomes useful historical data (Bordwell, 2002; Elliott et al., 1992) because films maintain a cultural and individual influence throughout time and provide an opportunity to analyze and understand the reality and individual beliefs of a previous time period (Reynolds, 2007). Once again, D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) illustrates this point. When viewed today, present-day audiences see aspects of racism that were not apparent to an audience in the year 1915 (Rogin, 1985). The film has not changed, but the perceptions by the audience have.

But the American film cannot serve as an exact historical document and must be viewed with care. As a source of information, American films are only one indicator of a historical period and are not expert witnesses (Williams, 2010). A viewer must adopt a more general viewing approach to determine the legitimacy of historical depictions by American films because of the artistic and often fictional aspects portrayed within American films.

As the distance between the release date of a film and the viewing of the film grows, the interpretation of the American film will shift and change because of the changing cultural values and norms (Dalton, 1999). For example, research on American films has described the way culture has represented higher education (Oliker, 1993) during a variety of time periods. An individual viewing many films produced over an extended period of time will observe shifting values and beliefs within those films and will ultimately view shifts of the representation of reality (Williams, 2010).

Films about Higher Education

Higher education has not been ignored by American films. In fact, an entire genre of films exists, one that focuses on the people and events in higher education (Reed, 1989). Four online film resources—videohounds.com, allmovies.com, boxofficemojo.com, and the Internet Movie Database (IMDB.com)—all provide a list of top “college” genre films (2010). Umphlett’s (1984) work, that Hinton (1991) described as a “genre study” (p. 14), divided college films into five sub-genres: musical comedy, pure comedy, romantic comedy, pure drama, and melodrama (Reed, 1989). The sub-genres of pure comedy and romantic comedy make up the vast majority of college films.

National Lampoon’s Animal House (1978) is the most widely referenced and studied of all college genre films. It is ranked 30th for all-time highest revenue grossing films and is the third highest earning comedy hit based on box office and rental income (Pirie, 1981). As a widely viewed American film, it has earned a place in American culture and within the American psyche, with the party cry, “Toga, toga, toga!” and “double secret probation” being popular references in the American vernacular. The film established an entire sub-genre of comedy and “laid the groundwork” for all future college comedies (Tucciarone, 2007, p. 844). The film’s popularity represents the substantial and important portrayal of higher education by American films.

Educational Research of Films

Although there are hundreds of films that focus attention on higher education, little research exists on the way American films portray higher education (Byers, 2005; Hinton 1991; Tucciarone, 2007). American films have taken great, artistic liberties in creating realities of higher education for viewers, and most of this content has gone unchecked by academics (Terzian & Grunzke, 2007). The little research that does exist

on the portrayal of education in American films varies greatly and depends on the date of publication and the methodology of selecting and analyzing the films (Tucciarone, 2007).

Schwartz (1963) provided a foundation for examining the way American films portray education in general and students and teachers in particular. Hinton (1991) referred to Schwartz's content analysis of feature films as a comprehensive inventory of American film's depiction of teachers and students in the American educational system. Schwartz's research, though, was more focused on the development of an inventory than on a deep analysis of higher education.

As of 2007, only three published studies had examined higher education in American films with most of the research focused on the films of the 1960s (Hinton, 1991). Umphlett's (1984) sociological work *The Movies Go to College* centered on higher education and offered genre study of the portrayal of higher education. Hinton investigated the characterization of major constituencies within higher education—students, professors, administrators, trustees, and alumni—as it changed over a period from 1960 to 1990. Tucciarone's (2007) content analysis examined only one higher-education film, *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978).

Film's Portrayal of Higher Education

The research in the portrayal of higher education acknowledges the varied ways in which higher education is portrayed (Ikenberry, 2005). Just as each individual has a specific and singular perspective on her or his college experience, each American film provides one unique viewpoint for an audience.

In their thematic analysis, Somers et al. (2006) found that Hollywood has always considered the college campus an attractive backdrop for films. The romantic idea of

attending a prestigious institution of higher learning is a popular draw for film-makers (Hinton, 1991). In the early years of American film, many audience members had little contact or experience with higher education. Films about higher education offered a glimpse into a lesser known and often exciting world (Byers, 2005). Early films about college life focused on the romantic appeal of attending, and those viewers unfamiliar with college life obtained an “insider’s look” at life in college (Tucciarone, 2007, p. 884). However, many inconsistencies pervade film’s depiction of higher education (Keroes, 2005). Films, as fictional works, often bend and distort the truth in order to create an attractive story (Tucciarone, 2007).

Of all the current research of the portrayal of education in American films, each is limited in scope by the time period in which the research was conducted and by the time frame selected for analysis. Ikenberry’s (2005) work covers the widest swath of time by encapsulating American films between 1875 and 1945, though few films existed in the early 1900s. Schwartz (1963) only looked at films from the period of 1931 to 1961. Terzian and Grunzke’s (2007) thematic analysis explored only films within a four-year period, between the years of 1961 to 1965. Hinton’s work (1991) studied films from 1960 to 1990, and the rhetorical analysis by Dittus (2007) focused on films from the 1990s. As of 2011, no published studies exist with regard to the last 10 years of film production.

Film’s Portrayal of College Constituents

Students, faculty, and administrators represent the majority of individuals involved or related to an institution of higher learning. Faculty, by definition, have a primary goal of providing instruction to students and supporting the research within their

disciplines (McCarthy, 2003). The portrayal of college professors includes a common denominator of power with either highly positive or highly negative outcomes (Keroes, 1999). The portrayal of teaching faculty in American films follows five distinct periods: the heroic era of the 1930s, the age of paranoia in the 1940s, the age of irrelevance in the 1950s, the war years of the 1960s, and the age of the hard-boiled educator from 1973 to present (Oliker, 1993, p. 72). The heroic period is marked by teachers who use teaching and education to champion social causes, as in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* (1934).

The transition from the heroic era to the hard-boiled educator age has paralleled the history of the United States (Oliker, 1993). As our culture has become more accepting of a wider array of thoughts and actions, so have the professors we see in films, and this progression has created a wider variation in faculty portrayals. The professor has moved from the role of the upstanding, highly regarded member of society, as in the 1930s, to one who lives on the fringes of social norms and uses authority and academics for more purulent interests (Reynolds, 2007). Reynold's thematic analysis affirmed that "this is an extreme change in a relatively short period of time, one where higher education has cinematically journeyed from a position considered as socially safe to socially scary" (2007, p. 237).

Many of the portrayals of faculty by American films are unbecoming. Films depict faculty as less-than-respectable individuals in the community (Dittus, 2007) who "drink (*Educating Rita*, 1983), do drugs (*Wonder Boys*, 2000), seduce their students (*The Pelican Brief*, 1993), are unethical (*Krippendorf's Tribe*, 1998), and are both religiously and politically liberal (*The Life of David Gale*, 2003)" (Reynolds, 2007, p. 237).

The frequency of the negative behaviors portrayed by faculty in American film

suggests that faculty have more personal failings than the average citizen (Reynolds, 2007). The films portray professors as out of touch with reality or common mores and often as lecherous, arrogant, and overzealous in their quest to improve their own status (Dittus, 2007). The portrayals depict professors who have lost a level of professional respect once conveyed in American films (Oliker, 1993). When faculty are not operating for their own selfish benefit, they are presented as disinterested and disengaged from their academic work (Keroes, 2005; Long, 1996; Williams, 2010), as the character Dr. Frank Bryant is portrayed in *Educating Rita* (1983).

Even when faculty are shown doing their work, the portrayals are often unflattering. Teaching is commonly represented in film with the professor standing at the front of a “passive classroom” (Reynolds, 2007, p. 107). Films depict professors in the classroom as egotistical, self-serving, controlling, and suppressing students for personal gain (Dalton, 1999). Further, they are seldom shown engaged in scholarly pursuits or in academic activities such as preparing for classes or conducting research (Keroes, 2005).

The depicted conduct of faculty begins with the power that faculty have over students and the institution. American films portray faculty with a great deal of power (Keroes, 1999). Faculty have authority to control not only the educational environment but the educational fate of students (Fahri, 1999; Keroes, 1999). When the power of faculty was presented in a positive light, faculty are portrayed as heroes of the institution, able to save the students, the school, and the community through their gallant, selfless, and ingenious efforts by way of their cunning intellect and resourcefulness (Fahri, 1999). Although the behavior of faculty has progressed through time, the diversity among the faculty has not (Reynolds, 2007; Smith, 1999). The majority of faculty portrayed in films

are male, heterosexual, older, predominantly single, and White (Reynolds, 2007).

Students comprise the second group portrayed in films about life in higher-education institutions. Films, such as *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), *Back to School* (1986), and *Good Will Hunting* (1997) center on student characters and their efforts to fit in or to challenge the establishment. The students portrayed in American films typically embolden qualities such as individualism, self-sufficiency, free expression, hard work, and fair play (Bulman, 2006). Like their faculty counterparts, students are seldom shown in films engaged in academic activities such as doing homework or studying (Hinton, 1991; Keroes, 2005). Films also show little of the academic preparation that students engage in to become eligible for attending college (Somers et al., 2006). When students are seen in class, they are passively listening to lectures or being condemned by their professors for not paying attention (Reynolds, 2007). College films typically focus on the extracurricular activities of students. Plots feature romantic interactions, sex, drinking, and other types of frivolity, as Umphlett's (1984) content analysis found.

Film's Portrayal of College Administrators

The third constituent group portrayed in American films is higher-education administrators. Only one study, *Sex, Lies, and Hollywood's Administrators* (Smith, 1999), specifically focused on the portrayal of educational administrators in films. Smith studied the appropriate and inappropriate behaviors of secondary-education administrators but did not include any higher-education administrators in the work. In almost all of the current research, studies found that the portrayals of education administrators were negative (Czech, 2004; Dittus, 2007; Fahri, 1999; Hinton, 1991;

Schwartz, 1963; Smith, 1999).

It was *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), a film that has been canonized as the quintessential American college comedy, that offered the most widely recognizable and, in many ways, detestable portrayal of a higher-education administrator (Ikenberry, 2005). Dean Vernon Wormer, portrayed on screen by John Vernon, is famous for declaring “double secret probation.” The line, “double secret probation,” is so popular that it was even used to market a subsequent DVD release of the film called the “Double Secret Probation Edition” (IMDB.com, 2010).

Administrators are often the targets of caricature depictions of power hungry bureaucrats, such as Dean Wormer's character in *National Lampoon's Animal House* or Dean David Martin in *Back to School* (Hinton, 1991). Dean Wormer epitomizes the portrayal of administrators who act negatively toward both students and faculty. In the majority of college films, relationships between faculty and administrators are seen as unfriendly and uncooperative (Hinton, 1991; Schwartz, 1963).

The work of the higher-education administrator, according to American film, is maintaining the order and bureaucracy of the institution which always foster personal gain or benefit for the administrator (Dalton, 1999). Administrators almost always serve as the authoritarian or “the heavy” (Hinton, 1991, p. 111). Unfortunately, the devious work of the administrator is never conveyed as being in the best interest of the students (Dittus, 2007). The hierarchical, bureaucratic environment of higher education is a primary cause of the often negative depictions of higher education in America (Keroes 2005), and thus administrators have “raised rulemaking to a fine art.” (Dittus, 2007, p. 145). Given the importance that both students and faculty place on autonomy and the

way students in films are depicted (Somers et al., 2006), the hierarchical system of higher education serves as a natural antagonist (Schwartz, 1963).

In films where administrators are not portrayed as authoritarians, they are depicted as out of touch or ignorant (Czech, 2004; Hinton, 1991). When the administrator is not portrayed as fiendishly plotting or extorting power where possible, he or she is apathetic or just plain stubborn (Fahri, 1999). The exemplary model of negative characterizations is when the college administrator in *Heart of Dixie* (1989) expels a student for supporting racial integration (Hinton, 1991). When administrators have conflicts with faculty, the result is seldom productive, with no “positive change” coming of the conflict (Dalton, 1999, p. 29).

In contrast, two films, *R.P.M.* (1970) and *School Daze* (2000), offer a more “sympathetic” portrayal of administrators (Hinton, 1991, p. 112). Each film shows the frustrations of presidents who are caught between the needs of students and the demands of trustees. Likewise, the dean in *Joy in the Morning* (1965) supports a female’s desire to continue her education (Hinton, 1991).

None of the available research for the present study provided an examination of the demographics of administrators portrayed in American films. An anecdotal review of administrators by Reynolds (2007) of films such as *Ghostbusters* (1984), *Back to School* (1986), *National Lampoon’s Animal House* (1978), *Old School* (2003), and *Accepted* (2006) yielded a demographic of older, White males, similar to the portrayal of faculty by American films.

Chapter Summary

The literature review began with a discussion of the working relationships among

administrators and other constituent groups in higher education, identified the dark side phenomenon, and outlined the need for collaborative working environments. From there, the review described an analysis of the interrelationships among the individual, culture, and film that substantiates the dynamic and dialectic relationships among films, individuals, culture, and reality. Finally, current literature on the portrayal of higher education was described. The literature review yields a complex conceptual model that shows the way film affects culture and individuals within a context of created realities.

American films, in the context of higher education, serve as a supplant for much of an individual's reality (Brodie et al., 2001; Elliott et al., 1992; Fahri, 1999; Ferro, 1988; Smith, 1999; Zavarzadeh, 1991). Individuals rely on the messages and information that are made available to them via American films (Brodie et al., 2001; Elliott et al., 1992; Fahri, 1999; Ferro, 1988; Smith, 1999; Zavarzadeh, 1991) because they have had little to no experience with a higher-education administrator. Films fill the void of information for American audiences and provide greater detail to generate an explicit reality.

The depiction of the three constituent groups in higher education is unflattering. Disengaged students, corrupt faculty, and zealous administrators pervade the landscape in American films. The dramatic license used to create an entertaining film may convey stereotypes so that individuals with little or no personal experience hold negative views of higher education and those who work within it (Gerbner & Morgan, 2002). For administrators, extending the authoritarian characterization for dramatic or comedic purposes forces them to appear uncaring and negative (Brodie et al., 2001). Even though a few, limited positive role models of administrators do exist, they are in sharp contrast to

the many negative portrayals that have been found to date.

In addition, although some empirical research is available regarding the way higher-education administrators are portrayed in American film, no one study focuses on higher-education administrators. The present study's focus specifically on higher-education administrators was thus designed to develop a deep understanding of the portrayals and possible messages conveyed to an American audience by popular American films.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The analysis of related literature supports the view that American films are a pervasive form of American culture; they thus provide a type of curriculum (Dalton, 1999) that influences the individual and cultural views of the audience. Because films represent significant individual and cultural perspectives on the world, they are worthy of exploration. The goal of the present research study was to explore the cultural messages of American films and to describe how higher-education administrators are portrayed as characters.

The research design for this study used qualitative methods to explore the way American films portray college and university administrators. An understanding of the ways that administrators are portrayed in films is useful in identifying culturally held perceptions that may affect the leadership of and relationships between administrators and other constituent groups such as faculty and students. However, this research study did not include exploring or describing any specific effects of these portrayals on the viewers.

This chapter describes the research design and methodology that were used to answer the research question: How are higher-education administrators portrayed as characters in popular American films? In this section, the data collection and analysis processes are described, beginning with the connoisseurship and philosophical assumptions of the researcher supporting the research process. Next, an overview of the

research design and the theoretical frameworks of the design are presented. Then, the procedures used for selecting films and collecting data from those films are explained. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the possible limitations of the study.

The Researcher as Tool

The present qualitative research study was performed through the filter of the researcher (Summers, 2008). Understanding the relevant background of a researcher and the researcher's philosophical assumptions is important for two reasons. First, explaining the background and philosophical assumptions helps in understanding the highly contextual process of the qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). An explanation of the background and philosophical assumptions helps describe and explain the context of the research. Second, data collection and analysis processes involve a high degree of interpretation. Understanding the researcher as a tool during the process of interpretation in the present study provides clarity regarding the outcomes of analysis.

In 2003, I moved from being a tenured member of the faculty at a community college to serving as an administrator. During this transition, I experienced a variety of responses from my faculty colleagues. A few faculty members congratulated me. The vast majority of faculty repeated a simple phrase, "You're turning to the dark side." With stunning repetition, faculty, friends, and family reiterated, "turning to the dark side."

As discussed in the literature review, the dark side statement is an allusion to the film *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977) and the desire of the main protagonist of the film, Darth Vader, for his son, Luke Skywalker, to join him and become a leader in the empire. The phrase "turning to the dark side" has become one and the same as switching the focus of a career, changing allegiances, and denouncing one's faith

(Gmelch & Parkay, 1999).

In addition to my faculty colleagues, so many other individuals who worked outside of academe also used the phrase “turning to the dark side.” The move from a faculty position to an administrative position in higher education caused a strong and noticeable reaction from my colleagues, friends, and family. It was as if everyone were reading from the same script. Academics and non-academics alike seemed to know and understand the dynamics behind shifting from a faculty role to an administrative role and the line between the two positions seemed very clear for these individuals. One side of the line, the faculty side, was good and bright; the other side of the line, the administrator side, was dark and evil. When an individual moves from the ranks of faculty to administration, it is often a perilous trip fraught with ever-changing relationships with constituent groups (Gmelch, 2010). This change in position is a time when individuals begin to lose connection with faculty colleagues and to form new relationships with administrative colleagues (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). Often faculty perceive and interact with the new administrator differently than they did when they were faculty colleagues (Palm, 2006).

The common replies of colleagues, friends, and family anecdotally indicated individual or cultural perspectives about administrators and represented fundamental cultural assumptions about differences between college faculty and administration (Gmelch, 2010). The experience outlined above was the underlying motivation for this research study and was a compelling set of events that caused me to wonder about the ways people have developed their views about higher-education administrators. I wondered about the reason so many people, from differing professions, repeatedly used

the same phrase to refer to my transition. This interest is the force that Marshall and Rossman described as the “want-to-do-ability” (2006, p. 11) of a research project.

The “want-to-do-ability” of the study was also supported by my capabilities to perform the research. The process of qualitative research demands a researcher who can effectively construct a question and methodology that will yield rich descriptive content (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Additionally, the qualitative researcher must rely on her or his own “perceptivity,” defined by Eisner as the “ability to differentiate” minute parts under study (1998, p. 64) and thus to gather relevant data for analysis. My experience and resulting connoisseurship supplied me with a perceptivity to do quality research in the area of content analysis. My theater training, educational background in rhetorical criticism and communication analysis, and the experience of working both as a full-time faculty member and as a college administrator contributed to the connoisseurship and perceptivity necessary to carry out this study.

As a researcher, my connoisseurship fits this study well because of my theater training and work as a faculty member and administrator in higher education. My background in live theater has included work as an actor, director, and playwright. I studied theater formally in academic programs and have continued to act, direct, and write since finishing my bachelor’s degree. In addition, I studied communication and oral interpretation in my first graduate program, with my master’s thesis research on the group oral interpretation form called *readers theater* and the use of non-fiction content as performance literature (Lee & Gura, 1992). Readers theater, noted without the apostrophe, is the group, oral performance of a literary text (Lee & Gura, 1992). The master’s thesis was a creative research endeavor that yielded a theoretical understanding

of both rhetoric and oral interpretation performance. As a faculty member at a community college, I have taught speech communication courses for 19 years and have coached forensics team students to compete in public address, oral interpretation, and debate events. I also wrote and directed readers theater performances that competed successfully in state and regional competitions.

These experiences shaped the research process itself. My background provided unique perspectives and strategies that aided in the research and shaped the qualitative research process as a creative endeavor, much as a classically trained musician carries her or his knowledge into the performance of jazz (Oldfather & West, 1994).

In addition to connoisseurship, it is important for the researcher to have a clear understanding of her or his own subjectivity (Peshkin, 1988). The nature of one's subjectivity is a part of the concept of the researcher as tool in the qualitative research process. My experiences in live theater contributed an artistic subjectivity to this type of research. In addition to being an expert, I have an appreciation and passion for the subject matter. As the term *connoisseur* is a synonym for expert, it also represents a high level of appreciation for the subject matter (Eisner, 1998). Eisner noted that the connoisseur not only knows a great deal about her or his topic but delights in discussing it and expanding her or his knowledge base.

However, my connoisseurship in higher education is limited to working in community-college settings. My work at a community college for almost my entire career contributes another element to my subjectivity. Because higher education is a much broader field of study, I may have been limited in my interpretations by a narrow lens of experience related specifically to teaching and being an administrator at a

community college. As I encountered depictions in films of four-year and research-oriented institutions, I had to be open to the different missions represented.

Philosophical Assumptions

To move forward with this qualitative research study, it was also important to recognize the philosophical assumptions that influenced the research design (Patton, 2002). Outlining these assumptions was especially important when using bricolage, which is defined as a methodology that uses “various fragments of inherited methodologies, methods, empirical materials, perspectives, understandings, ways of presentation, situated responsiveness, and so on” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 25). Bricolage allowed me to create both a rigorous and flexible methodology that was sensitive to the underlying values guiding the research (Kincheloe, 2001). The following philosophical assumptions provided the foundation which influenced the research design:

- Education is of value to students and the community.
- Positive working relationships between administrators and faculty improve the quality of instruction and the likelihood of student success.
- Teachers’ and students’ predispositions affect the quality of instruction and the likelihood of student success.
- American films inform an audience.
- American films shape perceptions of an audience.
- American films are symbolic.

These assumptions, coupled with the conceptual framework of the dark side phenomenon, influenced the research process, its overall design, data collection processes, and data analysis processes.

Connoisseurship

Connoisseurship (Eisner, 1998) was a part of every aspect of the research design, the theoretical frameworks, the selection of films, and the procedures for data collection and analysis. Connoisseurship informed the construction of domains and provided both insight and appreciation for data interpretation. My connoisseurship informed the judgments (Eisner, 1998) related to data analysis (Merriam, 1998) and supplied a substantive understanding of the pentadic elements of the dramatistic model by Kenneth Burke (1969) which, in turn, informed the data-analysis process. My connoisseurship included an educational background and practical experience background in theater, as well as several years working in higher-education administration. The identification of domains occurred from this set of career and educational experiences. My connoisseurship provided the “ability to differentiate” minute components under study, as well as to identify subtle differences within the data (Eisner, 1998, p. 64). My theater training provided a crucial piece of antecedent knowledge by which to analyze the data. My educational background in rhetorical criticism and communication analysis expanded on this knowledge and provided analysis of the data as both a theatrical and communicative event.

The experience of working both as a full-time faculty member and as a college administrator contributed to my connoisseurship and perceptivity in a way that informed my understanding of the events taking place within the selected films. Watching films and collecting data on the actions and interactions of administrators were informed by my experiences as a college student, faculty member, and administrator. Domains were constructed based on my experience in working as a college administrator and as a

faculty member. Having served as both an administrator and faculty member, I was able to identify components that were particularly characteristic or uncharacteristic of each constituent group within a specific clip.

Research Design

The research design for this study had two major components: the collection of data and the analysis of data. As part of the research design, the methods used for collecting the data from the selected American films were flexible within a structured process. Flexibility in the methodology was necessary to meet the unique data collection needs of the study (McLeod, 2001). The use of structure in data collection provided rigor and comprehensiveness. The most direct way to describe the portrayal of administrators in film was to analyze the content of American films as data artifacts (Merriam, 1998) and thus to use a methodology tailored to gather and analyze the data of these artifacts (Patton, 2002). Thus, for the data collection and analysis, the research design included a process for selecting films, collecting data within each of those films, and comprehensively analyzing the data.

The research design for this study had three qualities for addressing the research question. First, the research design enabled me to see the complexity of the data collected from each of the artifacts. Second, the research design permitted me to see the details of the data (Patton, 2002) through the use of an organized, systematic process that was supported by a strong, theoretical base. Finally, the design increased understanding of the data that were collected from the artifacts.

Bricolage

The research design included components from many disciplines, including

educational leadership, communication studies, theater, rhetorical analysis, and media and film studies. Each of these fields was necessary to extract data from the portrayals of administrators and then collectively to analyze those portrayals. The study demanded a qualitative methodology that was flexible to meet the needs of these divergent fields of study. Often several theoretical bases are needed to conduct research (Eisner, 1998; Patton, 2002). Thus, a bricolage was selected to provide this form of flexibility (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Schwandt, 2007) to the research design. Within qualitative research, the bricoleur uses a variety of tools in order to arrive at the desired outcome (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; McLeod, 2001). A bricolage combined the strengths of several theoretical approaches.

In addition, the complexity of collecting and analyzing data from a diverse array of films required an approach that adapted to the unique needs of the study. A bricolage should minimize the limitations of any one, specific methodology (Eisner, 1998; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Because studying multiple films meant studying multiple artifacts, a system for this type of content analysis was needed. In addition, films include an array of visual and auditory qualities that required a methodology that may examine the many different visual and auditory data within a film clip. Indeed, films are a form of bricolage as a collection of moving images and sounds (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Thus, a bricolage was especially suitable to this form of media research.

The bricolage for this study included Kenneth Burke's (1969) pentadic analysis, aspects of George Gerbner's (1998) message system analysis, and basic principles of content analysis (Patton, 2002). Due to the complexity of the content analysis, no one

method was deemed appropriate for this study. Content analysis is generally focused on one specific text for analysis and looks at the text in detail (Krippendorff, 2004; Patton, 2002). Pentadic analysis permits analysis of the five elements of each component of a film clip, but it is not designed for analysis of multiple sets of clips (Burke, 1969). Message system analysis looks at multiple clips, but lacks a substantive methodology for considering each film's multiple visual and auditory components (Gerbner, 1998). Thus, joining the several forms of analysis provided an ideal means for collecting and analyzing the data within this study. Content analysis provided a mechanism to analyze content, pentadic analysis provided a means to collect the data from each individual film, and message system analysis provided the framework to analyze the content across multiple films to create a comprehensive method of data analysis. The data collection and analysis methodology for the present study are visually represented in Figure 3. This figure shows a bricolage of pentadic analysis, message system analysis, and inductive analysis that form the unique research design for data collection and analysis.

Using all three traditions in data analysis demonstrated a bricolage through the creation of a new, unique tool that specifically fit the needs of the research study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Each research theory has strengths, but each alone may have limited the breadth, depth, and scope of data collection and analysis. Flexibility in the research design enabled the collection of this specific set of data and the subsequent analysis of the data in a meaningful way (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; McLeod, 2001).

Content Analysis

In general, the research design is a form of content analysis because the data

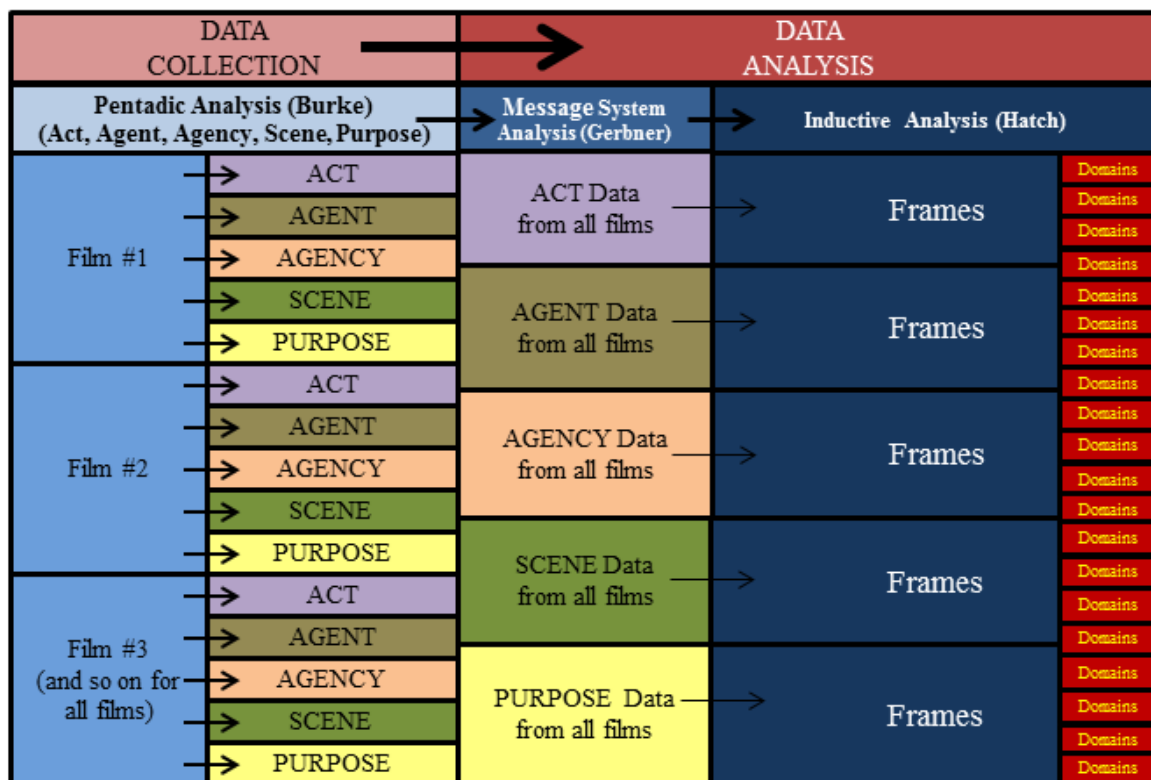


Figure 3. In this figure, data collection and analysis are illustrated. Moving from left to right, data were collected from the films using Burke's Pentadic Analysis (1969). Then, the pentadic data from each film were combined into five pentadic elements. These five sets formed Hatch's (2002) frames and, with the identification of domains within the frames, led to the descriptions of data analysis.

chosen for collection reside within specific content (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Content analysis is used as a means for "describing and interpreting artifacts of society" (Merriam, 1998, p. 108). Prior (2004) described content analysis as a method to study culture because it "makes 'thought' visible" (p. 78). Thus, content analysis of American films is a relevant form of data to explore American culture and the cultural messages related to administrators in higher education (McLeod, 2001).

Previous research on portrayals in American films sought to extract data without analyzing the actual artifacts, American films, by reading film reviews to perform a content analysis (Schwartz, 1963) or by examining other "extrafilmic" components, such

as production notes, screenplay manuscripts, or film criticisms (Ferro, 1988, p. 30).

However, the research design for this study limits intermediary film components and emphasizes investigating the actual films that a contemporary American audience might likely see.

Theoretical Framework for Data Collection

The preceding overview of the research design provides the background for a detailed description of the main theories for data collection—pentadic analysis and message system analysis. These two theories create the framework by which data collection and analysis occurred.

Burke's Dramatistic Theory

The process of content analysis required a systematic method of data collection for viewing and recording the data within American films. The framework of Kenneth Burke's dramatistic theory (1969) is a viable mechanism for generating qualitative data in this manner (Feldman, 1995; Prasad, 2005). Burke's work served as a systematic, guiding method for understanding the portrayals seen within the films by using dramatistic analysis for each clip in a film that included an administrator portrayal.

Burke's dramatistic theory is based on the concept that society is inherently dramatic by nature (Feldman, 1995; Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991). Dramatistic theory affords a systematic process with "an analytic starting point" (Prasad, 2005, p. 59) for collecting data. The use of Kenneth Burke's dramatistic theory provided a mechanism for systematically collecting data from each film clip that included a portrayal of an administrator. Dramatistic theory breaks down the data of a single event through the use of five elements for analysis, known as the pentad (Burke, 1969; Feldman, 1995; Rybacki

& Rybacki, 1991). Burke's pentadic elements include: act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose.

Previous studies of portrayals in films have included two techniques for collecting and organizing data—Smith's (1999) coding of the dialogue of clips and Lee's (2004) use of screenplay manuscripts for analysis. Although it is important that the dialogue within a film clip be considered, data from the dialogue should be collected in proportion to the pentadic elements (Burke, 1969; Feldman, 1995). Collecting data only from the dialogue may strain the balance of the analysis and give the dialogue more emphasis than any other visual or auditory component within the data set. Prior (2004) cautioned researchers not to focus just on the words of a document when collecting data and acknowledged that a document "stands in a dual relation to the fields of action" (p. 91). Therefore, the attention to dialogue within a clip should be in relation to all five pentadic elements. In the present study, dialogue data within the film clips were collected within the *act* pentadic element and were thus included with data from the other pentadic elements of scene, agent, agency, and purpose.

Pentadic Analysis

Kenneth Burke's (1969) pentad consists of all the major parts of a dramatic event—act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. The *act* element describes the action of the clip. The *scene* element describes the location and background of the situation. The *agent* element describes all of the characters participating in the action within the clip (Feldman, 1995). The *agency* is the means by which the agent or agents act, and the *purpose* describes the perceived motivations of the agent. These five elements are a specific way to view any communication event or narrative in order to extract data

(Feldman, 1995). For film viewing, Burke's pentadic analysis dissects each clip into five data elements (1969). The data within these five elements can then be further examined to perform data analysis. Although data within an event are divided into five elements, the pentad does not discount the benefit of the holistic lens (Ferro, 1988; Meisenbach, Remke, Buzzanell, & Liu, 2008). That is, with data collection using these five elements, I was able to collect data comprehensively from each clip being viewed.

Gerbner's Cultivation Theory and Message System Analysis

Dramatistic analysis (Burke, 1969) served as an inductive method for collecting data from each film clip. The data collection process required a way to combine the data collected from the clips identified from multiple films in order to proceed with data analysis. Components of George Gerbner's (1998) work in cultivation theory provided a first step in data analysis to move beyond the study of a single piece of content. Both content analysis and pentadic analysis are fixed on the collection of data from one, particular artifact. Cultivation theory is based on the concept that individuals are affected by the many repeated visual and auditory messages they consume (Gerbner, 1998; Signorielli & Morgan, 1990). Gerbner argued that the messages to which individuals are repeatedly exposed shape the way they think and feel (Gerbner & Morgan, 2002). Cultivation theory is specifically designed to investigate the repeated messages that individuals experience (Gerbner, 1998; Scull & Peltier, 2007; Signorielli & Morgan, 1990). The goal of cultivation theory is not to investigate one element, as in pentadic analysis, but to look at the aggregate experience from repeated exposures (Gerbner & Morgan, 2002; Signorielli & Morgan, 1990; Tucciarone, 2007).

Cultivation theory uses a two-step process for analysis that includes a message

system analysis, and a cultivation analysis (Gerbner & Morgan, 2002; Signorielli & Morgan, 1990; Tyrawski, 2010). Specifically, cultivation theory describes the way that media influence people's thinking (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Davies, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2004). Cultivation theory was developed as a way to describe the information that influences individuals and cultures by examining both the content of messages and surveying the audience regarding their perceptions (Signorielli & Morgan, 1990). The approach is a comprehensive method for exploring the influence of media over multiple viewings (Gerbner & Morgan, 2002; Tucciarone, 2007; Wilson, Longmire, & Swymeler, 2009). For the purpose of this study, only the first area of cultivation theory, message system analysis, was used. The second step of cultivation theory, cultivation analysis, surveys audience members about their perceptions of the messages they receive and thus was beyond the scope of the present research study.

Cultivation theory describes the repetitive, pervasive messages that occur in television (Gerbner, 1998). It was applicable in the present study because, like television, American films are extremely popular and thus are pervasive within the culture. The message system analysis step of cultivation theory connected the content of each of the films in order to identify the ways that administrators are portrayed to American audiences.

The data collection procedures for this study thus included a content analysis through a combination of dramatisic theory and cultivation theory. Pentadic analysis provided a process for collecting data within an artifact. Message system analysis within cultivation theory then provided the framework for looking at multiple artifacts as a means to identify repetitive messages, that is, the portrayals of higher-education

administrators in multiple films.

Theoretical Framework for Data Analysis

Pentadic analysis and message system analysis provided a process for collecting data. Once the data from different films were collected, the analysis of the data occurred. J. Amos Hatch's (2002) inductive analysis was the primary theoretical basis for data analysis. Through the use of inductive analysis, data were arranged into frames whereby domains and then themes were identified and described.

Frames for Data Analysis

Hatch's general inductive model (2002) was used for data analysis. Specifically, the arrangement of data within the five elements of pentadic analysis (Burke, 1969; Feldman, 1995) effectively organized data for closer examination using Hatch's inductive analysis. By combining data from clips of multiple films, frames were generated that coincided with each of the pentadic elements.

Specifically, data were collected on the portrayal of administrators in the pentadic areas of act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose (Burke, 1969; Feldman, 1995) for each film clip. The single pentadic elements from each film clip were then combined to form one frame for each of Burke's pentadic elements. For example, the data from the pentadic element of *act* are combined from all of the film clips. Film clips from the same film were combined and then joined with film clips from the other films. This process continued for all five pentadic elements.

Domains for Data Analysis

After the data were organized into frames for each of the pentadic elements, further analysis could occur. The second step in the inductive analysis process was the

creation of *domains* (Spradley, 1979, p. 162; see also Hatch, 2002) within each of the frames. Domains serve as a mechanism to pair similar data at a specific level to find “semantic relationships” (Spradley, 1979, p. 111). Within each frame of data, the researcher looks for similarities and pairs the data to identify domains (Hatch, 2002). Spradley (1979) acknowledged that the process of analyzing domains in this manner permits an “explicit and systematic” approach (p. 112). This inductive model served well to isolate and pair data.

Selection of American Films for Data Collection

The next step in the process of data collection and analysis is to identify the process for the selection of data sources. Data sources for this research study included artifacts from popular American films that contain portrayals of higher-education administrators. Artifacts are one of the three sources of data used in qualitative research studies (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). American films served as the artifacts for data-collection procedures because the research design centers on a content analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) of the way administrators are portrayed in films. This methodology follows the similar research of Czech’s (2004) and Nederhouser’s (2000) content analysis of films because films are used as the artifacts for analysis.

The pervasiveness of films was the overriding criterion for film selection. As discussed in the literature review, audience members have access to a wide range of films released over a period of time because films from the last 100 years are available to audiences via a variety of technological outlets, for example, DVDs, online streaming, and television broadcasts. These developments in film accessibility make the dates of film releases irrelevant in this study. Based on the need to find American films with high

viewership, four criteria guided the selection of films:

1. The film was released commercially within the United States.
2. The film had a relationship to higher education.
3. The film had a high level of viewership.
4. The film had a substantial portrayal of a higher-education administrator.

The first criterion was the location of the film's release. Only films that were released in the United States were considered for study because the goal was to understand the way administrators are portrayed to an American audience (Lee, 2004).

The second criterion for film selection was that the films selected were related to higher education. The goal for this criterion was to find as many films as possible that might include portrayals of higher-education administrators. Many films that include portrayals of administrators take place on college campuses, like *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978). The films relate to higher education either by taking place on a college campus or including individuals who work on college campuses. For example, *Ghostbusters* (1984) was included because one of the clips in the film portrays a dean at a research university who interacts with the main characters, even though the remainder of the film action occurs off-campus. Therefore, the film selection process included all films that could have any possible connection with higher education and with a portrayal of an administrator.

Numerous filmographies were used to begin the process of identifying films with administrator portrayals by using key terms, such as *higher education*, *college*, *university*, *campus*, and *dean*. All of the filmographies used to find possible films are listed in Appendix A. Informal suggestions from colleagues provided an additional source for

film selection.

All of the filmographies and colleagues' suggestions were aggregated into a comprehensive list of films that included a total of 1,253 unique titles. From this comprehensive list, the films were then ranked by the frequency with which they were listed in filmographies or suggested by colleagues. Including only films that were listed in a filmography at least twice narrowed the field to 305 films.

The third criterion for inclusion of a film for data collection was the level of viewership. A high level of viewership of a film may indicate that a film is more pervasive in the culture because it is viewed by more members of the culture. A film is pervasive if it is both accessible and "widely viewed" by an audience (Dalton, 1999, p. 22). Therefore, films with a high level of viewership have the most potential to influence individuals and to have a cultural effect (Smith, 1999).

Box office revenue was initially considered as an indication of a high level of film viewership, but the data available were difficult to use. For example, not all films have box office revenue data, especially for films released several decades ago that require adjustments for inflation. In addition, individuals who purchase a ticket for a film may not view the actual film that they have paid to see. Finally, box office data only represent films shown in theaters and do not include viewership via DVD or other viewing venue. Voting data from the Movielens database (Riedl & Constan, 2006) from the University of Minnesota were considered, as well. Even though the data set represents over 1 million ratings of over 10,000 films, the data available did not include many of the 305 higher-education films previously identified.

The Internet Movie Database (IMDB) was chosen for identifying the viewership

of films because of its large scope of included films and the popularity of the site with film viewers (Bulman, 2006). IMDB is the largest film website and has over 57 million visitors each month (Koh, Hu, & Clemons, 2010, p. 4). Visitors are able to rate films on the website. Their ratings provide ample data to identify films that have been viewed by a large number of individuals. For example, the top 100 films on IMDB have 2,944,037 ratings collectively (Koh et al., 2010, p. 5). Films that have more ratings by visitors to IMDB could, by deduction, have a higher viewership by an American audience (Sinha & Pan, 2005). Thus, the IMDB ratings were used to identify the level of viewership of the films related to higher education.

The 305 films related to higher education were rank ordered from those with the highest number of IMDB ratings to the lowest number of IMDB ratings to determine a starting point for data collection. Data were collected from films with the highest possible viewership. Films having more IMDB ratings are likely to have a higher viewership and, thus, could be more pervasive in American culture. A list of the top 100 college films ranked by the number of IMDB ratings received is provided in Appendix B. Starting data collection with highest IMDB ratings ensured that the most pervasive films that included administrator portrayals were analyzed.

The final step in film selection was to identify those films with substantial participation involving an administrator or administrators, as modeled within Wolfrom's mixed methods study (2010). For the present study, substantial administrator participation was defined as any speaking part in the film by an administrator as a character or the inclusion of an administrator in the action of the film that denotes involvement with parts or others in the clip that is more than an appearance or as a

“glancing fashion” (Lee, 2004, p. 160). Films that include a clip or clips where an administrator is simply a passive observer of the action were not used; for example, a clip with a college president watching a basketball game but not interacting with others was not included.

Films with the highest viewership were then viewed, in order to capture films that contained both high viewership and a substantial participation by an administrator. Films with substantial administrator participation were included in the study, and those without substantial participation by an administrator were watched in their entirety but data were not collected for analysis. This process identified 21 unique films with substantial administrator participation. Because of the design of the film selection procedures, the 21 films have both substantial administrator participation and the highest possible viewership. The list of the films with substantial administrator participation selected for the presented study is provided, with rank order of IMDB ratings, in Appendix C.

To aid in the analysis, each film that met the criteria for selection was viewed in its entirety before the data collection process began. Elsaesser and Buckland (2002) noted that a film should be watched in its entirety or “obliquely” as a “starting point” for analysis (p. 122). This initial viewing provided a frame of reference to assist in the data collection process (Hinton, 1991) by familiarizing me with the content of the film and the extent of the administrator portrayal. A basic understanding of the characters and plot of the film helps me to begin the more specific observations for data collection (Elsaesser & Buckland, 2002).

Procedures for Data Collection

The theoretical framework used for data collection and analysis yields specific

procedures for organizing, recording, and analyzing data. This section provides a description of the procedures used for collecting data. As described above, pentadic analysis (Burke, 1969) provided the first step in collecting and organizing data into five data sections for each film clip (Feldman, 1995). These data were collected and placed in vertical columns with one column including data from one film clip. Films with multiple clips thus had multiple columns (see Figure 4).

Pentadic Data Collection Stage 1

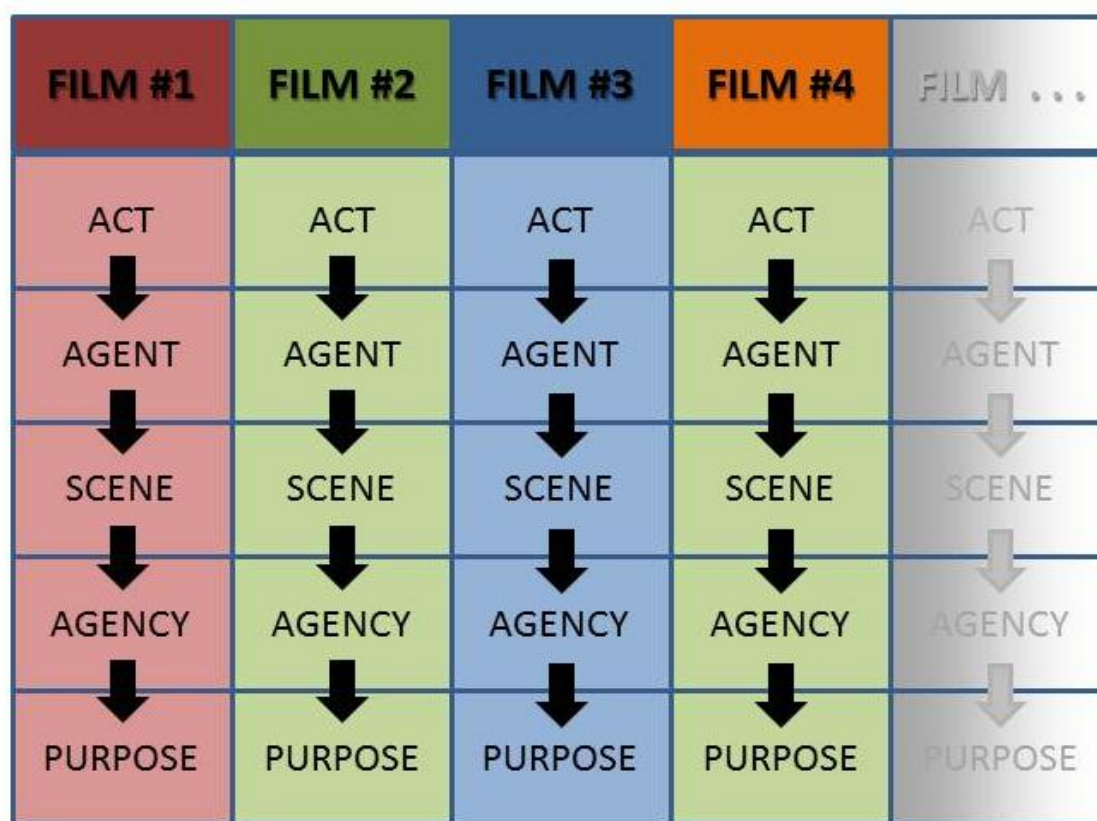


Figure 4. Data were recorded for each film clip in the five pentadic areas as shown. Data collection moved from film #1 to film #2 and so on.

Viewing Films and Recording Data

In order to work with the films as a data source most effectively, films were

digitized to easily access and view films. Digitizing the film involved creating a digital video file from a DVD source. The films were converted into MP4 files for playback on a portion of a computer screen. The digitized video file could be quickly and easily paused, reversed, or forwarded to particular clips within the film.

This process aided me in pausing, slowing down, and reversing the film clips in order to record the data. The digitized films were viewed using the VideoLan Client (VLC) media player, available as shareware software from videolan.org. The VLC player actively displayed the duration and current time of the film in order to view any clip of a film quickly. In addition, the VLC player slowed down the visual and audio aspects of a film in order to hear and encode dialogue clearly. The VLC player also captured digital still images of film clips. These still images served as a reference for data collection as well as figures in the discussions of data analysis presented in Chapter 4. Per the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, the use of still images from the films viewed in this dissertation is for research purposes and falls within fair use copyright standards.

The VLC digital media player was an optimal tool for viewing films and collecting data. The visual and audio qualities were excellent for collecting data coming from a DVD source. Because the content was stored digitally, there was no denigration of the audio or video quality of the films after repeated viewings.

After each film was viewed and determined to include substantial administrator participation, it was viewed again and data were recorded for each clip that included administrator interaction on a data collection sheet (see Appendix D for an example) using the five elements of the pentadic analysis as a guide (Burke, 1969). The time when

the clip began in the film and the sequence of the clip within the individual film were also recorded on the data collection sheet. Data collection from most clips required pausing, reversing, or slowing down the film to complete accurate description and recording of the data. Splitting the computer screen between viewing the clip and recording data from the clip was especially helpful.

As each film clip was watched, a rich description of the pentadic elements was recorded. As much data as possible were collected and recorded for each of the pentadic elements within a film clip. For example, when recording data about the *scene* element, care was taken to observe and record all aspects of the clip's surroundings and context. The setting, architecture, pieces of furniture, décor, time period, and time of day were all transcribed onto the data collection sheet. Using the data collection sheet, data were collected from each of the identified administrator clips. One data collection sheet was used for each film clip.

Films Selected for Data Collection

In all, 32 of the top 100 films were viewed in their entirety to determine if they included the portrayal of an administrator. After viewing 32 films, a substantial amount of data was collected from a variety of films that widely differed in genre, release date, and substantial involvement of an administrator. Of the 32 films, 21 included administrators in a substantially participative role. The 11 films eliminated in this step did not include substantial administrative participation and follow in rank order from highest viewership to the lowest:

- *Good Will Hunting* (1997)
- *High Fidelity* (2000),
- *Scream 2* (1997),
- *What Lies Beneath* (2000),

- *Road Trip* (2000),
- *Rope* (1948),
- *American Graffiti* (1973),
- *Lolita* (1962),
- *The Rules of Attraction* (2002),
- *Proof* (2005),
- *Rudy* (1993), and
- *American Pie Presents: The Naked Mile* (2006),

These films lacked substantial participation of an administrator as defined by Wolfrom (2010) and Lee (2004). The films included in the study with substantial participation of higher-education administrators are listed below in rank order from the highest viewership to the lowest:

- *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989),
- *A Beautiful Mind* (2001),
- *Social Network* (2010),
- *Ghostbusters* (1984),
- *Old School* (2003),
- *Legally Blonde* (2001),
- *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978),
- *The Nutty Professor* (1996),
- *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002),
- *Wonder Boys* (2000),
- *Accepted* (2006),
- *Orange County* (2002),
- *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003),
- *The House Bunny* (2008),
- *Flubber* (1997),
- *Urban Legend* (1998),
- *The Visitor* (2007),
- *Drumline* (2002),
- *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984),
- *The Great Debaters* (2007), and
- *How High* (2001)

Each of the 21 films with substantial administrator participation was viewed in sequential order, starting with the film that had the highest viewership. In the case of the 21 films with administrator portrayals, the rating of the films on IMDB.com as of

October 9, 2011, ranged from 206,208 ratings for *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) to 18,772 ratings for *How High* (2001). The average number of IMDB ratings per film that were selected for data collection was over 56,000. This number of ratings suggests a very high viewership.

Using Burke's (1969) pentadic analysis, data were divided within a film clip into the five data elements. Using pentadic analysis, data were collected for each of the five pentadic elements: agent, scene, act, agency, and purpose for each of the 174 clips identified within the 21 films. This produced 870 total data sets for analysis.

Genre of Films Selected for Data Collection

The selected films for data collection represent diverse genres for analysis. The genre of the films determined to have substantial administrator participation included 11 comedies, 7 dramas, and 1 each for action, family, and horror genres. Under the genre of drama, three of the films represent a *docu-drama* sub-genre because the plots of the films, *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), *Social Network* (2010), and *The Great Debaters* (2007), are based on actual events.

Because comedic films use a formulaic approach to the antagonist and protagonist (Tucciarone, 2007), it is important that other genres were included to represent the entire spectrum of American films. Previous research on depictions of higher education in films has typically used a specific genre for analysis. Umphlett's (1984) and Tucciarone's (2007) research focused on a particular genre or on an individual film. In contrast, the films used in this study included films from several genres, such as *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), *Social Network* (2010), and *The Visitor* (2007) that created a much broader base for describing administrator portrayals.

Release Dates of Films Selected for Data Collection

The release dates of the selected films ranged from *National Lampoon's Animal House* that debuted in 1978 to *Social Network* that was released in 2010; thus, the films spanned a time period of 32 years. Half of the selected films with substantive administrator portrayals were released within the last 10 years. *Social Network* (2010) was the most recently released film in the present study.

The release date of a film affects the portrayal of the time period in which the film's plot is set. The majority of films take place in the present day coinciding with the films' release dates. However, because the span of film release dates is over a 32-year period, many of the films appear dated in terms of setting, technology, and clothing. For example, *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984) is set in the present day, but the costuming and technology appear dated because the film was completed and released over 25 years ago.

Procedures for Data Analysis

The process of data analysis occurred with the identification of frames based on the use of Gerbner's message system analysis (1998), identification and analysis within domains, and the creation of connections among the domains to identify major themes. The 21 films with a substantial administrator interaction yielded 174 total film clips from which to collect data. Each film ranged in the number of clips from only one clip in a film to 21 clips in a single film. Each clip ranged in length from a few seconds to several minutes.

To facilitate data analysis, data were reorganized so that each pentadic element from all of the films was displayed in a single column (see Figure 5). This arrangement of data permitted analysis by pentadic element across all of the film clips. For example,

Organizing Data for Analysis

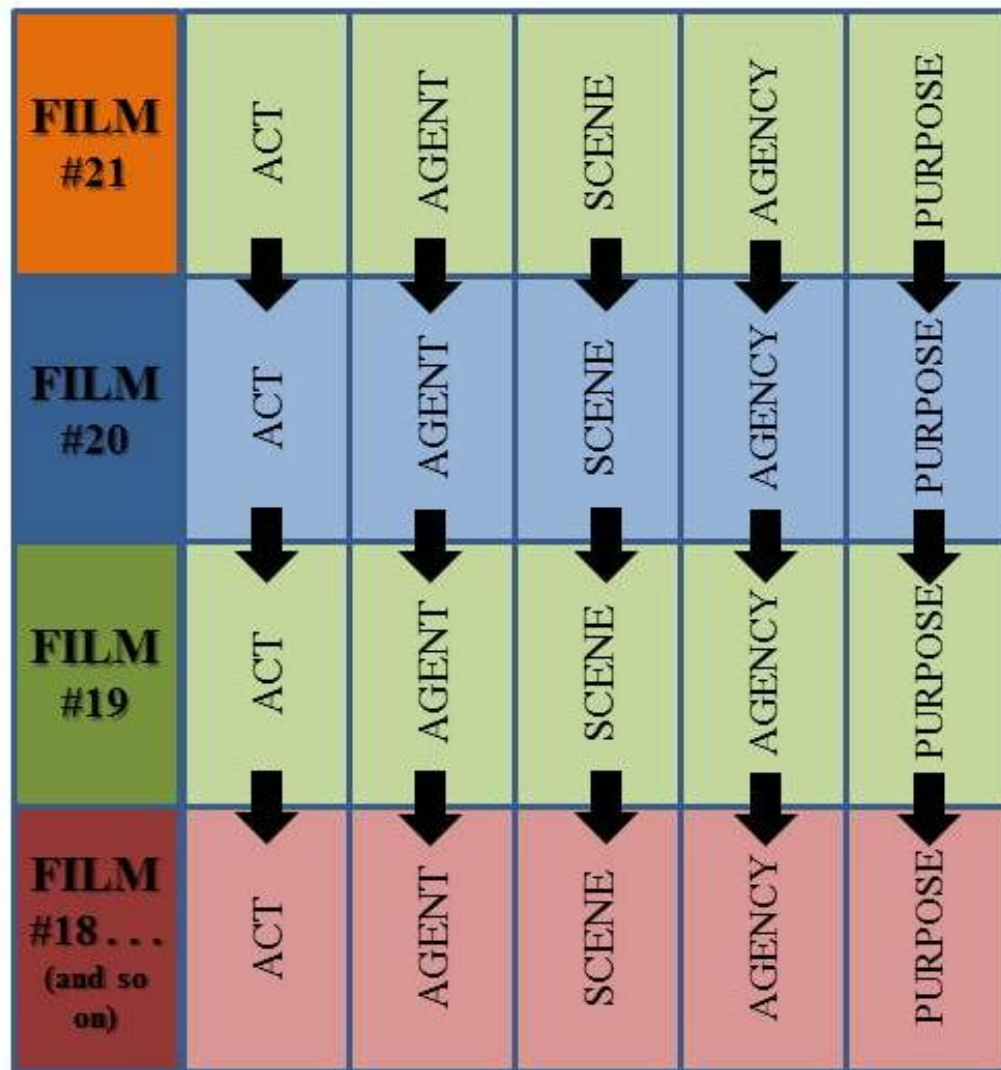


Figure 5. Data analysis is enabled by flipping the pentadic data collection at a 90 degree angle and then working down from each pentadic element of each film. So, the *Act* elements of all the films are analyzed together.

the *act* data were displayed in a single column from the film from film #21 to film #1 so that this element could be analyzed. This approach was followed for the remaining four pentadic elements.

This arrangement provided two benefits for aiding the analysis. First, the

arrangement of data aided in the recognition of repetitious data for the message system analysis (Gerbner, 1998). That is, this display enabled the identification of repetitive messages within a specific pentadic element. Second, this organization of the pentadic elements from multiple films became the frames (Hatch, 2002) to guide further data analysis. Next, the data were analyzed to identify domains within each of the frames identified (Hatch, 2002).

Organization of Data into Frames

The *frames* of the administrator portrayals are each of the five pentadic elements and include data from multiple films. In order to organize the data into frames, the data collection sheets from all film clips were combined into a single spreadsheet. The spreadsheet included one column for each pentadic element. For the 21 films, each column contained 174 rows of data corresponding to each of the 174 clips identified for data collection. For example, the data collected for the pentadic element of *act* was combined for all of the film clips within one column. This process was repeated until there was a column of data for each pentadic element. This data arrangement aided the process of analyzing data across multiple clips and films.

Identifying Domains in the Data

Once the frames of the data were organized, the next step in the analysis was to identify domains (Hatch, 2002) within each of the frames. As discussed above, the domains served as a mechanism to pair specific data at a level to identify “semantic relationships” (Spradley, 1979, p. 111). Within each frame or column of data, I looked for similarities of content within the frames, then identified and matched the data to identify domains. Where a domain was identified, a *marker* was placed within the frame.

Then, the specific domain was recorded into a coding worksheet to organize the domains. A sample of the coding worksheet is provided in Appendix E. This process continued for each of the five frames. Each domain was given a unique coding label. The coding label was a unique set of letters that described the domain by combining whole words or parts of words. For example, the domain label that identified an administrator praising a faculty member was *ADMINFACPRAISE*. The unique set of letters for the domain coding name could then be searched electronically within a word-processing document to compare similar domains.

Through multiple readings of each frame, 47 unique domains were recorded on the coding worksheet using labels such as *ADMINDRESS*, *ADMINAGE*, *ADMINMARRIAGE*, *ADMININEPT*, and *ADMINITLE*. The full list of unique domain encoding names and a brief description is provided in Appendix F. As Spradley (1979) noted, the analysis of domains in this manner is an “explicit and systematic” (p. 112) approach to data analysis. The domains could then be analyzed for patterns to describe messages and then to identify larger thematic components within the administrator portrayals that spanned across multiple films.

This unique approach to analysis identified repetitive messages within the data. As discussed in Chapter 2, George Gerbner’s cultivation theory (1998) explores the repetition of messages and their influence on both individuals and cultures. The data analysis design provided for the identification and analysis of data domains across a variety of films. By framing data over all 21 films, domains that occur repetitively over various films were identified and analyzed. Domains served as the “predominate messages” of content analysis (Patton, 2002, p. 453). To that end, repeated examples of

administrator portrayals are provided in the data analysis to demonstrate the repetitive nature and cultivating effect of these messages. The final step in the data analysis process was analyzing the data within the 47 identified domains to describe the messages that lead to pervasive themes within the films regarding higher-education administrators. Descriptions of the themes are discussed in Chapter 4.

Limitations

Several limitations operated within the present study. First was the possibility that an important film was excluded from those films selected for analysis. Although a thorough process was followed to identify all possible films for analysis, a risk existed that the portrayal of an administrator in a film went undetected and therefore was not included in the analysis. It was difficult to find films that included higher-education administrator portrayals. Because the cataloging and organization of films depends on brief summaries that led to film selection, a film with a substantial participation of an administrator might have been over-looked. This risk was more likely for the portrayal of administrators in a minor role rather than in a major role.

The possibility of omitting a short clip for analysis within a selected film is a second limitation of the study. Because there is no empirical catalogue of clips in films, the listing of clips that were recorded cannot be verified. Although each film was viewed in its entirety and careful attention was taken to work methodically through the film, there remains a chance that a short clip was missed. As with all research, the possibility of human error exists and should be acknowledged.

Another possible limitation was that the selection of films depended on a system of determining high viewership that may skew the selection of films to a younger or more

technology-savvy audience. The Internet Movie Database requires users to work within a website on the Internet. The access and comfort of using the website limits the users to technology-savvy individuals. As a result, the age of audience members who rate films on IMDB is likely younger than the average American film audience member. Such voting by a likely younger audience might not represent the views of the general American audience.

An additional limitation related to the time periods in which the films were set. Because the settings of the films vary from the 1930s to the late 2000s, the pentadic elements of scene, agent, and agency may be influenced by the time period in which the film was set. Additionally, the leadership qualities identified in a film from the 1930s may convey different meanings than those qualities within a film set some 70 years later. For example, in *The Great Debaters* (2007) the Dean of Students at Harvard University refers to the ground-breaking occurrence of an intercollegiate debate between Harvard University and a historically Black college. In the context of the time period, the 1930s, this event was unique and politically charged. However, such an event today is not considered unusual.

A final limitation in this research is the intention of films. This study analyzed the meaning of films with the purpose of considering their portrayals of higher-education leadership. However, the intention of films is to entertain. Regardless of the meanings derived from the analysis, the portrayals are based on the desire of filmmakers to create entertainment value. Thus, the portrayals may have been subject to exaggeration.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology that was used to study the portrayal of

higher-education administrators in American films. The role of the researcher as tool was discussed, and philosophical assumptions were described. Based on the requirements for qualitative research, a theoretical framework for data collection that combined Kenneth Burke's dramaturgic theory (1969) and aspects of George Gerbner's cultivation theory (1998) was outlined. Hatch's (2002) inductive model provided the theoretical framework for data analysis, along with the use of components of Gerbner's cultivation theory. Descriptions of specific methodological procedures followed for film selection, data collection, and data analysis. The methodology outlined in this chapter resulted in systematic, rigorous, and meaningful processes for the selection and analysis of data.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS

The goal of the data analysis was to extract and describe the cultural messages about higher-education administrators portrayed in American films. Content analysis can be used to identify patterns within the data (Patton, 2002). Specifically, the analysis of data was a process of “sense-making” (p. 452) by breaking down and organizing the collected data. Chapter 3 described the theoretical framework for the collection and analysis of the data. This chapter begins with a description of the pentadic scene element to provide context, resembling a film camera establishing a wide-angle shot. The analysis then proceeds to a description of the agent pentadic element to examine the administrator portrayals, as if a camera were panning over the 25 different administrators within the data. Next, by using educational leadership theory, the pentadic elements of act, agency, and purpose are discussed together to describe the complexity of the leadership behaviors of the administrators. This last step resembles a camera moving into close-up shots of leadership behaviors. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the major themes identified in the data through data analysis.

Educational Criticism

The theoretical basis for the data analysis includes processes within Elliot Eisner’s (1998) *educational criticism*. Educational criticism is a means for the description, interpretation, and evaluation of an event in order to identify pervasive themes. Educational criticism provides a “structure for perception” (Eisner, 1998, p. 88) and guided the process of data analysis in this study. The first part of Chapter 4 includes

the description, interpretation, and evaluation of the data collected from the portrayal of higher-education administrators in popular American films.

The work of data analysis in this study mirrors the work of a film critic, who describes and interprets pieces of a film and evaluates the quality of the work. The data analysis also holistically provided strong description to develop pervasive themes (Eisner, 1998). Similar to the perspective of a film critic, connoisseurship is a vital component of data analysis, as the subjectivity and the ability to comprehensively describe content (Eisner, 1998; Peshkin, 1988) influence the process. Within educational criticism, the researcher uses theory and research to interpret data. For this study, connections to leadership theory and research support the interpretations of the portrayals of administrators and aid in “understand[ing] the meaning” (Eisner, 1976, p. 145) that the films convey to audiences.

This chapter includes the description, interpretation, and evaluation of the data. Description and interpretation of the films clips are discussed and evaluated based on the quality of leadership displayed. Thus, the description and interpretation of content are organized into negative and positive leadership qualities based on literature in leadership research and theory. The final section of Chapter 4 describes Eisner’s (1998) last step, thematics, with five themes identified from the data analysis. The step of thematics seeks to find the “generalizations” (p. 103) embedded within the data.

The Scene Pentadic Element

In this section, a description of the scene pentadic element will occur. The data described represent the larger environment in which the administrator portrayals take place. The data is divided into sections that address the locations, institutions,

architectural features, and time periods of the films analyzed.

Locations

Many colleges in the films viewed are located in the Northeast part of the United States. Princeton University in *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), Columbia University in *Ghostbusters* (1984), Connecticut College in *The Visitor* (2007), Wellesley College in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), and Harvard University in *Legally Blonde* (2001), *Social Network* (2010), *The Great Debaters* (2007), and *How High* (2001) are all existing institutions located in the Northeast part of the United States. Stanford University in *Orange County* (2002) and Wiley College in *The Great Debaters* (2007) are the only existing institutions portrayed in the viewed films that are located outside of the Northeast. Of the fictional institutions where a location was identified, Harmon College in *Accepted* (2006) is in the state of Ohio while Faber College in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978) is located in the fictional town of Faber in the southern part of the United States.

Institutions

The representations of institutions of higher learning were varied. Eight of the institutions were fictional: Adams College in *Urban Legend* (1998); Atlantic A and T, the historically Black university in *Drumline* (2002); Medfield College in *Flubber* (1997); Faber College in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978); Harmon College and South Harmon Institute of Technology in *Accepted* (2006); and Pendleton University in *Urban Legend* (1998).

When existing institutions are portrayed, they are mostly elite institutions such as Columbia University in *Ghostbusters* (1984); Connecticut College in *The Visitor* (2007);

Harvard University in *Legally Blonde* (2001), *Social Network* (2010), *The Great Debaters* (2007), and *How High* (2001); Princeton University in *A Beautiful Mind* (2001); and Wellesley College in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003). Two existing institutions portrayed in films located outside of the Northeast are Stanford University in *Orange County* (2002) and Wiley College, the historically Black college located in Marshall, Texas, in *The Great Debaters* (2007). The colleges and universities in the present study represented 4 year, baccalaureate-granting institutions or professional graduate schools.

Architectural Features

The settings for the selected films follow a consistent design. The portrayals show a very traditional collegiate environment reminiscent of an Ivy League campus. The settings feature buildings with Romanesque architectural components, featuring tall columns, formal facades, and stone and brick construction (Council of Independent Colleges, 2006). The campus buildings include administrative offices, classrooms, and student residences. The earliest released film studied, *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), depicted architectural features that are also seen in later films. The administration building in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), with the ionic Roman columns and the use of the Latin "V" for "U" in the word "Building" shown on the front of the building (see Figure 6), is indicative of the look and feel of the settings for the majority of the films analyzed.

The classrooms depicted in the films are typically large rooms used for lectures with elevated seating areas for 80 or more students. The rooms are equipped with desks that provide a small writing surface for students (see Figure 7) and a large, stage-like area for faculty members to lecture. Many of the rooms feature a podium and either chalk

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Figure 6. Campus depictions in films often feature turn of the 20th century buildings with Romanesque columns and chiseled lettering like this building from *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978).

boards or white marker boards. Films with these types of learning environments include *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), *Accepted* (2006), *Old School* (2003), *The Nutty Professor* (1996), *Flubber* (1997), *How High* (2001), and *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003).

The film *Accepted* (2006) shows a stark contrast to the traditional lecture hall. Teaching takes place in a variety of non-traditional learning environments. Dean Lewis appears in a lawn chair outside of his motor home, where students congregate to hear him lecture on various topics. When a formal classroom is shown, the setting is much smaller and personal, with students seated in close proximity to the professor.

Time Period

The time periods represented in the selected films span from the year 1935, as in *The Great Debaters* (2007), to the early 2000s. With the exception of *The Great*

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Figure 7. The lecture hall in *How High* (2001) is representative of how most classrooms appear in American films. Large lecture-type halls dominate film settings.

Debaters (2007), *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), and *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), films' plots take place in a present-day time period concurrent with the year of the film's production, spanning from the early 1980s through 2010. Based on this span of time, some differences in time-sensitive components such as décor and fashion can be observed. For the historical films, the attitudes and values of the characters are noticeably different (Ikenberry, 2005). For example, *The Great Debaters* (2007) acknowledges the 1935 historic event when Harvard University invited a group of students from Wiley College, the historically Black college, to an intercollegiate policy debate on campus. These historical shifts in the attitudes and values of particular time periods have subtle and important effects on the portrayals of administrators in the films analyzed.

The Agent Pentadic Element

The collected data generated the portrayal of 25 administrators from the 21 selected films. The administrator character names and the films in which they appear are as follows in rank order from highest number of IMDB ratings:

- Marcus Brody, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989)
- Martin Hansen, *A Beautiful Mind* (2001)
- Larry Summers, *Social Network* (2010)
- Dean Yager, *Ghostbusters* (1984)
- Gordon Pritchard, *Old School* (2003)
- Mr. Springbrook, *Old School* (2003)
- Head of Admissions, *Legally Blonde* (2001)
- Dean Wormer, *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978)
- Dean Richmond, *The Nutty Professor* (1996)
- Dean Mooney *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002)
- Sara Gaskell, *Wonder Boys* (2000)
- Walter Gaskell, *Wonder Boys* (2000)
- Richard Van Horne, *Accepted* (2006)
- Ben Lewis, *Accepted* (2006)
- Dr. J. Alexander, *Accepted* (2006)
- Don Durkett, *Orange County* (2002)
- Jocelyn Carr, *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003)
- Sara Jean Reynolds, *Flubber* (1997)
- Dean Adams, *Urban Legend* (1998)
- Charles, *The Visitor* (2007)
- President Wagner, *Drumline* (2002)
- Dean Uhlich, *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984)
- Dean of Students, *The Great Debaters* (2007)
- Carl Cain, *How High* (2001)
- Philip Huntley, *How High* (2001)

The title of the administrator is listed if the full proper name for the character was not specified in the film. For example, in *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002), Dean Mooney's first name is never disclosed.

Administrators' Race

Administrators are portrayed as either White or African American. Of the 25 administrators, two are African American: President Wagner in *Drumline* (2002) and Dean Cain in *How High* (2001). In a report for the American Council in Education,

Eckel, Cook, and King (2009) found a similar distribution among chief academic officers. According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (2010), minorities represent less than 16% of all “executive, administrative, managerial” positions in higher education, with African American administrators comprising fewer than 9%. Although Asians and Hispanics comprise almost 8% of all administrators, their identities are not portrayed as administrators in any of the films analyzed.

Administrators’ Gender

Among the 25 administrators portrayed in the films, 22 are male. There are 3 female administrators represented in the films *Wonder Boys* (2000), *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), and *Flubber* (1997). This portrayal of administrators is inconsistent with the gender of actual administrators. As of 2007, women represented 45% of senior college administrators (King & Gomez, 2008).

When female administrators are portrayed, they were almost never shown doing administrative work. In the first clip of *Flubber* (1997), President Sara Jean Reynolds is mixing her personal and administrative life; she discusses university budgets on the telephone while she stands on her desk in order to have her wedding dress hemmed. Chancellor Sara Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000) is never seen in her office. In one clip, a character visits Chancellor Gaskell’s office, only to find that she is not there. The absence of clips showing female administrators at work produces limited and one-dimensional depictions of them. In contrast, male administrators in the films analyzed are almost always portrayed doing some type of administrative work in or out of their offices.

Male administrators also constitute all of the characters who serve in supporting

roles and who are not integral to the plot development. For example, the Dean of Students in *The Great Debaters* (2007) and Dean Mooney in *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002) have minimal input to the plot of the film. All of the female administrators, however, are crucial to the development of the story.

The actions of two of the three female administrators center on romantic relationships with the films' protagonists, both male professors at their institutions. Both are comedies, but they represent different sub-genres. *Wonder Boys* (2000) is an adult comedy with content represented by the discussion between Chancellor Sara Gaskell and Professor Grady Tripp. They are discussing whether she will abort her pregnancy because the baby is fathered by Grady, who is currently married to another woman. This content is a stark contrast to the Disney film *Flubber* (1997), where a wholesome President Sara Jean Reynolds appears in full-length flannel pant pajamas in a scene in her bedroom.

The portrayal of women administrators in films indicates that gender does not predict their leadership approach. Leaders of the same gender operate very differently. For example, President Jocelyn Carr of *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) is portrayed very differently from President Sara Jean Reynolds and Chancellor Sara Gaskell, who are having romantic relationships with male faculty members. President Carr is seen only in her presidential role, meeting faculty members within her office, talking to them in the hall, and officiating over college events. The differences in the portrayals are supported by literature. While Eagly and Johnson (1990) found no conclusive evidence that the behaviors of leaders are differentiated by gender, they also argued that task-oriented behaviors were emphasized when leaders were surrounded by their own gender. This

leadership theory is congruent with the portrayal of Jocelyn Carr, who heads an elite women's institution where the majority of her colleagues and subordinates are women. Carr is repeatedly shown doing the task-oriented work of a leader and is focused on the mission of the institution, often at the expense of her faculty.

Administrators' Age

The majority of the administrators appear to be in their early to late 50s. The films depict these individuals as having been working for some time. According to the American Council on Education (Eckel et al., 2009), 34% of chief academic officers and 49% of presidents are over the age of 61. Only 19% of chief academic officers are under the age of 50. Whether moving up through the ranks or simply being the next in the line for a leadership role, the administrators in the films analyzed are portrayed as seasoned professionals. In terms of age, the portrayals in films are consistent with the current environment of administrators in higher education.

In contrast, Sara Jean Reynolds in *Flubber* (1997) and Sara Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000) are the youngest administrators who appear in the films. Both hold high-level positions, and both are portrayed as physically attractive. The only other female administrator, President Carr in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), appears much older and less physically attractive than the other two female administrators (see Figure 8). Carr's grey suits and hair clipped back contrast the appearance of the young and beautiful protagonist, Katherine Watson, who is portrayed as young, attractive, and free-thinking. President Carr in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) and Dean Adams in *Urban Legend* (1998) represent the oldest administrators in the films analyzed, appearing to be in their 70s. Both portrayals convey stern, authoritative characters who serve as antagonists to the

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Figure 8. President Jocelyn Carr in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) represents one of the oldest administrators portrayed in film, appearing to be in her early 70s.

main characters of the films.

Administrators' Familial Relationships

In addition to the race, gender, and age of the administrators in the films analyzed, the familial situation of administrators is also varied. For 12 of the administrator portrayals, there is no clear indication of their family relationships. Eight of the administrators are married or, in the case of Sara Jean Reynolds in *Flubber* (1997), married by the completion of the film. Only two administrators are shown as having offspring: Don Durkett in *Orange County* (2002) and Sara Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000); both are portrayed as married and have children ranging in age from infant to teenager.

Administrators' Dress

Connoting their status, administrators in films are consistently the most formally dressed in every situation. The overwhelming choice of apparel is the grey suit, denoting authority and uniformity. With the grey suit, the neck tie of the male administrator is a staple of the administrator's wardrobe. The only variance to the business suit for male administrators is the choice between a straight neck tie or a bow tie (see Figure 9), as worn by Dean Richmond in *Flubber* (1997), Dean Mooney in *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002), Dean Uhlich in *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984), and Chancellor Huntley as part of a tuxedo in *How High* (2001). Female administrators' attire varies more than that of their male counterparts.

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Figure 9. Dean Mooney from *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002) wears the prototypical attire for an administrator in films with a grey suit, dress shirt, and tie. In this case, Dean Mooney differentiates himself from other administrators by wearing a bow tie in place of a straight tie.

The formal attire of administrators is a visual symbol of the tradition and formality associated with higher education. A man in a suit connotes authority. The films portray an environment steeped in tradition and formality. Even outside of the workplace, administrators are seen in formal attire. In *Orange County* (2002), Don Durkett appears in a sweater vest with a button-down shirt and dress slacks, even though he is in his home late in the evening. Dean Lewis in *Accepted* (2006) provides the only alternative to highly formal attire. Because Dean Lewis is pretending to be an administrator at a fictitious college, he is often found in very casual attire, such as a tropical print, wide-collared shirt with light colored pants, and a panama hat, attire that suggests someone on vacation. The attire for Dean Lewis is unexpected for an administrator in higher education. Two of the administrators, the Dean of Students from Harvard University in *The Great Debaters* (2007) and Joanne Carr in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), appear in academic regalia during formal events. The attire of both historical films conveys the traditional and ceremonial aspect of higher education.

Sternberg (2011) alluded to the fact that in the culture of higher education, the dress of faculty members is much more casual than that of administrators. Administrators dress more formally because their work often involves individuals who work outside of the academic community. Within films, administrators express little individuality in their attire and do not deviate from the formal and conservative.

The attire of the female administrators in the films is not significantly different from the males. Of the three female administrators, only one routinely wears a women's suit. In the period film *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), Jocelyn Carr is consistently shown in conservative business attire. Her hair is pulled back and clipped. This representation is

indicative of the 1950s, the period in which the film's plot takes place. The two other female administrators, Sara Jean Reynolds in *Flubber* (1997) and Sara Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000), are shown in semi-formal business attire or evening wear (see Figure 10). In the first clip with Sara Jean Reynolds, she is shown wearing her wedding dress as it is hemmed for her upcoming wedding.

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Figure 10. Dean Sara Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000) appears in socially-oriented attire as opposed to formal business attire.

Administrators' Titles

Administrators are commonly addressed by their administrative titles. Other characters in the films repeatedly address deans by their titles. A noticeable exception to the use of official titles in portrayals is Sara Jean Reynolds in *Flubber* (1997); she is never addressed by her title as president of the university. At one point, she is addressed as "Dr. Reynolds," but there is no other verbal mention of her title or line of authority during the film. Reynolds also is seldom shown actually working in her capacity as the

president of the institution. The work of the presidency is a tangential aspect to her romantic relationship in the film's plot.

The title of *dean* is used widely in film portrayals and in higher education but has its etymological roots in religion (Onions, Burchfield, & Friedrichsen, 1966). The term was first used to refer to religious leaders and is based on the Latin term "decanus," meaning ten (Onions et al., 1966). The term is now associated with higher education, the supervision of faculty, and the leadership of an institution (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). As with the dress and décor of American films, the title of dean connotes a level of professional attainment and prestige.

Administrators' Positive Leadership Behaviors

The analysis of the scene and agent elements within the administrator portrayals establishes the background for the administrators' actions within films (Burke, 1969). The analysis of the administrators' actions evolved from domains constructed from the pentadic elements of act, agency, and purpose. The data were organized into two categories of leadership: positive and negative. The analysis begins with a review of the positive leadership portrayals and is followed by the more pervasive, negative leadership portrayals.

Although the majority of leadership behaviors of administrators in films are negative, there are several examples where positive leadership is portrayed. Marcus Brody in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), Dean Mooney in *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002), Martin Hansen in *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), Dean Durkett in *Orange County* (2002), and Dean Simmons in *The House Bunny* (2008) are all administrators who generally display positive attributes as educational leaders. All

exhibit the essential quality of being positive and seeing the potential in their subordinates (Greenstreet, 2010; Gunsalus, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). These positive qualities emerge as acts of mentoring, expressing concern, helping others, using rules and trials in helpful ways, and collaborating with faculty. Each area is described in the following sections.

Administrators Mentoring and Teaching

Analysis of the films provides several examples of administrators taking on the roles of both mentors and teachers for colleagues. Part of the work of administrators is teaching others by providing meaningful and honest feedback to faculty (Kouzes & Posner, 2003; McCaffery, 2004). For example, in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), Indiana Jones looks to his friend and administrator Marcus Brody by asking a content question. The dialogue is Socratic in nature. In *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), Martin Hansen is ethical in working with his colleague and friend John Nash. He provides honest feedback, telling John that he is “a terrible teacher” when John requests the opportunity to teach, but Hansen eventually helps John to begin teaching.

Chancellor Sara Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000) also provides guidance by encouraging Professor Grady Tripp to think through a problem. Although Sara is in a romantic relationship with Tripp, the guidance is meant both on a personal and professional level. She tells Tripp, “I’m not going to draw you a map, Grady. Times like these, you have to do your own navigating.” This form of leadership is characteristic of a mentoring relationship among colleagues (Gunsalus, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2003), whereby the mentor seeks not to give advice or answer questions but to serve in a supporting role to give freedom to the mentee to find the answers.

The best example of teaching in all of the films, ironically, is illustrated by a person pretending to be an administrator. Dean Lewis in *Accepted* (2006) is repeatedly shown in a Socratic dialogue with students during which he provides his unique and often negatively charged insight on the world. Lewis's teaching is motivated out of a genuine desire to share his ideas and knowledge.

Administrators Expressing Concern for Others

Another positive leadership quality exhibited by administrators in films is the display of concern or regard for others. Marcus Brody in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) repeatedly expresses concern for both Indiana and Henry Jones to the point where Brody joins Indiana to search for and rescue his father, Henry. Martin Hansen in *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) becomes a caring friend to his graduate school rival, John Nash, and helps John to return to the University to work on his studies and then begin to teach. Dean Simmons in *The House Bunny* (2008) expresses concern for students and works through the school's policies to help an unpopular sorority on campus.

Although the college president, Sara Jean Reynolds in *Flubber* (1997), is involved in a romantic relationship with faculty member Philip Brainard, she is very supportive of his research. In one clip, Philip and Sara Jean discuss the financial benefits of his recent scientific discovery, and she provides her business acumen to help make the most of his discovery. In another clip, Sara Jean is seen stroking Philip Brainard's back, comforting and supporting him nonverbally through touch. In *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984), Dean Uhlich tries to help a group of freshman students find housing by providing suggestions and support to the fledgling group. Although he is unable or unwilling to circumvent the

institution's policies, he does express, both verbally and nonverbally, his support of the group and concern for their well-being.

These portrayals are characteristic of exemplary practices in academic leadership. In the above examples, leaders work to create trustworthy, cooperative relationships with others (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Rath & Conchie, 2008). Kouzes and Posner (2003) affirmed that "reciprocity" (p. 69) is crucial for establishing the type of relationships where leaders can be trusted (Rath & Conchie, 2008). This reciprocity often can come in the form of mentoring colleagues and providing instruction (McCaffery, 2004).

The leadership theories of Hawthorne, Follett, and McGregor all recognize the important social needs of the human being, with each one deserving appropriate attention (McGregor, 1960; Northouse, 2004). Helping others to find their power and voice through "encourag[ing] the heart" is an exemplary leadership quality (Covey, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 9; McCaffery, 2004). Similarly, in leader-member exchange theory, the idea of forming meaningful, positive relationships is a crucial component of good leadership and is marked by providing ongoing, quality interaction between leaders and subordinates (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Administrators Helping Others

There are several examples where administrators reach beyond the normal functions of their positions to help colleagues. Marcus Brody in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) helps Indiana Jones search for his father. Dean Lewis in *Accepted* (2006) helps the students by pretending to be an administrator to trick the students' parents. Dean Richmond in *The Nutty Professor* (1996) helps to raise funds for research. Dean Durkett in *Orange County* (2002) accompanies a student to help him be admitted

into Stanford University. Dean Uhlich in *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984) helps by interceding on behalf of the freshmen and giving them a place to stay after their fraternity house is destroyed. The Dean of Students at Harvard in *The Great Debaters* (2007) helps to encourage diversity and limit racism during the 1930s by hosting a debate with an African American team. Sara Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000) repeatedly helps a faculty member and a student who are in trouble. At one point, Gaskell helps a faculty member, Grady Tripp, to sit up after he passes out. Later in the clip, Sara refuses to help Grady to his feet, apparently in an effort to send a message to Grady that he needs to stand up on his own. At the end of the film, Grady admits that Sara was a helpful force in his life by saying, “I had someone to help me get there.”

As framed by Kouzes and Posner (2003), Chancellor Gaskell’s gesture of not helping the faculty member to his feet is an example of “helping others to act” (p. 63) by providing an opportunity for the faculty member to take steps to correct his actions. Ultimately, the actions of the faculty member help him to identify his insecurities and to take actions to correct them. The idea that the work of a leader is to remove obstacles is also stressed by the path-goal theory of leadership (House, 1971). Path-goal theory emphasizes that leaders should create a work environment that is both supportive and directive (House, 1971; Northouse, 2004).

Administrators Using Rules to Help

Most films highlight administrators using rules to hurt students and faculty members; however, there are instances when films show administrators using rules to try to help students. Unlike Dean Wormer’s use of rules to get rid of students, Dean Mooney in *National Lampoon’s Van Wilder* (2002) uses the rules to engage in a fair judicial

process for a student hearing. He states the following:

We are now in session. Mr. Wilder, you are found to be in violation of article two, section b of Coolidge's by-laws, soliciting of alcohol to extreme minors, which is grounds for immediate expulsion. You have opted to appeal. The floor is yours.

In *The House Bunny* (2008), Dean Simmons tries everything to work within the rules.

Although Dean Simmons wants to help the students, his only option is to bend the rules by giving the sorority more time to find members. Simmons says, "I'm under a lot of pressure from other sororities complaining that we're bending the rules for you. Natalie, rules are rules." Although feeling pressure from constituents, Simmons stays within the confines of the policies of the institution.

Administrators Using Trials and Formal Procedures to Help

As noted previously, trials in films are often used to serve the negative intentions and actions of administrators. This same concern for due process is also an aid for administrators helping others. Dean Uhlich in *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984) and Dean Simmons in *The House Bunny* (2008) effectively use the trial process to assist students. In *Accepted* (2006), Dr. J. Alexander also uses the trial process to help the students of the fictitious school, South Harmon Institute of Technology, to explain their actions. The trial process results in the school being awarded probationary accreditation. In *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002), Dean Mooney is presiding over a hearing to determine if Van Wilder, a student, should be expelled from the university for providing alcohol to children. Dean Mooney conducts the process fairly and without undue influence. Dean Mooney proposes a democratic process that, in turn, enables Van Wilder to finish his college education.

Administrators Collaborating with Faculty

Within the films viewed, there is one example where an administrator repeatedly collaborates with colleagues. President Carr in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) exemplifies collaborative leadership in seeking input from faculty and alumni when making decisions. She is the only administrator who is shown in a meeting where she seeks input from constituent groups and listens to the input that is provided. Unfortunately, the input is short-sighted and limits President Carr's opportunities for change and growth among the faculty. Carr lacks the courage and vision necessary to negotiate and compromise in order to promote a more progressive instructional agenda. Inevitably, Carr succumbs to the pressure of alumni even though it is implied in the film that she believes another direction is more appropriate. Carr's collaborative approach can be described as a form of "mature partnership" within the theoretical framework of the leader-member exchange theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 230). Leader-member exchange theory emphasizes high-quality communication and relationships within the context of the workplace.

Administrators' Negative Leadership Behaviors

Although there are some examples of positive leadership behaviors by administrators in films, most of the portrayals can be categorized as examples of negative leadership behaviors. The next section describes elements of the administrators' hurtful and unethical behaviors. The section concludes with a description of the aggression that some higher-education administrators themselves experience in the films.

Administrators Threatening Subordinates

A significant domain identified in the portrayals is the use of threats. These threats range from mild warnings to physical harm. The mildest of threats made toward a

faculty member is portrayed in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) when President Carr makes a mild threat to Professor Watson by saying, “You’ll have your formal review in May. Until then, a little less modern art, hmmm? Happy holidays.” President Carr is subtle but clear in her message to Professor Watson that her continued employment is contingent upon her changing her methods of teaching. In general, however, the threats by administrators in the films are more obvious. For example, President Wagner in *Drumline* (2002) threatens the band director and the future of the program at Atlanta A & T University by issuing an ultimatum to the band director to change the type of music performed and adds “or there won’t be a program next year.”

The threats escalate from being dismissed from a position to actual physical harm. In *Wonder Boys* (2000), Chancellor Sara Gaskell points a loaded gun at the chest of her lover, a faculty member in the English department. Although she is not aware that the gun is loaded, she pretends to fire, saying, “Pow” (see Figure 11).

Another example of a physical threat is made in *The Nutty Professor* (1996) when Professor Klump repeatedly interferes in Dean Richmond’s fund-raising efforts, Richmond says to Klump, “You know those national rifle people are right. If I had one now [motions as if with a gun], bang.” Later, Dean Richmond renews the threat to murder Professor Klump in a more blatant manner:

If anything goes wrong for any reason, I’m going to kill you. And, I don’t mean that as a euphemism. I’m going to literally kill you. I’m going to strangle you and choke off your air supply until you pass away.

Based on leadership theory, the threats made by administrators in these films resemble the “authority-compliance” quadrant of Blake and Mouton’s managerial leadership grid (1964). This quadrant is exemplified by leadership that minimizes

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Figure 11. In *Wonder Boys* (2000), Chancellor Sara Gaskell holds a loaded gun to the chest of faculty member, Grady Tripp.

communication and narrowly focusses on tasks. Leaders who operate from this quadrant use authority to gain compliance and prefer control and power over subordinates and situations (Blake & Mouton, 1964). In *The Nutty Professor* (1996), Dean Richmond has a very task-oriented approach to his work. Dean Richmond's sole mission is to raise funds for research for the university and threatens Professor Klump, who is undermining his efforts.

Leaders with a disproportionate need for control and power are likely to lose perspective (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). The most problematic aspect of these administrators' behaviors is the limitation of trust from constituent groups. Trust is central to effective working relationships and leadership (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; Senge, 1990). Communication is also a seminal component of leadership in order to build trusting relationships (Greenstreet, 2010). Both idle threats and those of physical harm damage effective working relationships and limit trust (Rath

& Conchie, 2008).

Administrators Acting Aggressively Toward Subordinates

Other negative behaviors exhibited by administrators in these films are aggressive behaviors toward staff members. Those individuals who serve as clerical or administrative assistants to administrators are often harmed by administrators with little or no provocation. For example, in *Old School* (2003) Dean Pritchard's secretary replies on an office intercom to his request to notify security with, "They've already been called, sir." He responds gruffly, rolls his eyes, and yells into the intercom, "Call them again!" Similarly, Dean Wormer in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978) expresses anger when his secretary does not immediately share the results of the fraternity members' mid-term grade report. When Wormer asks about the grade report, the secretary responds, "Oh, yes, I have it right here" and holds up the folder. Dean Wormer reacts by angrily snatching the folder from her hands and looks at her in a disgusted manner. In *The Nutty Professor* (1996), Dean Richmond literally screams at his secretary on two separate occasions.

These expressions of anger towards subordinates demonstrate a lack of emotional intelligence (George, 2000). Emotional intelligence is an essential quality of an effective leader (George, 2000; McCaffery, 2004). Both Wormer and Pritchard are deans in comedy genre films. However, this type of negativism towards staff members is seen even in the docu-drama genre. As a department chair, Martin Hansen in *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) snaps at a staff member, "Why can't people read their memos, huh?"

A contrasting behavior is seen with female administrators because their relationships with their female secretaries or administrative assistants are portrayed as

more amenable and equal. For example, President Jocelyn Carr in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) reacts to the nonverbal behavior of her assistant and defends her decision to fire an employee. The short exchange between President Carr and her secretary demonstrates not only Carr's respect for her assistant's opinions but also her concern for their positive relationship. The same type of exchange occurs with Sara Jean Reynolds in *Flubber* (1997), when she seeks the opinion of her assistant about the wedding dress she is having fitted (see Figure 12).

Administrators Enjoying the Suffering of Others

Not only are administrators shown making threats and expressing anger, they are portrayed enjoying the suffering of others. Students are most often the recipients of this negative behavior. Dean Adams in *Urban Legend* (1998) wishes a student well

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Figure 12. In *Flubber* (1997), the President of the university, Sara Jean Reynolds, is having her wedding dress fitted in her office while her assistant looks on. Reynolds seeks the opinion and approval of her assistant.

immediately after informing him that he has been fired from the school newspaper. He states, “I didn’t fire you. Your editor did. We spoke an hour ago. Have a good weekend.” Through his tone of voice and facial affect, Dean Adams is nonverbally expressing great pleasure in telling the student that he has been fired. Similarly, Dean Cain in *How High* (2001) smiles when announcing to two students, Silas and Jamal, that they are now on academic probation because of poor grades. In *Accepted* (2006), Dean Van Horne is smug when he exclaims to a group of parents and students that a rival school is a hoax. Van Horne says, “For all the students who have been duped, good luck applying for schools next year.” His body language and facial expressions communicate enjoyment in conveying bad news to students while at the same time expressing sarcasm. In *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984), The Lambda Lambda Lambda fraternity tricks another fraternity during a game of tug of war and sends the members of the Alpha Beta fraternity falling all over themselves. Dean Uhlich reacts to the tumbling of the fraternity members by smiling and laughing loudly. In a later clip, Dean Uhlich nonverbally shows pleasure in telling a group of student athletes, “jocks” as he refers to them, that they will no longer have their campus-based housing.

Dean Pritchard’s portrayal in *Old School* (2003) is the most theatrical example of an administrator taking pleasure in the suffering of others. Pritchard grins as he tells his old acquaintances that they will not be able to stay in their newly rented house on campus. Later, as he tells the fraternity members that they have lost their charter, Pritchard is seen gloating and enjoying the moment. Finally, Pritchard watches with no visible expression of concern as an acquaintance is accidentally set on fire. As others jump to their feet in alarm, Pritchard does not react. Pritchard shares this vitriol for a select

group of students with his supervisor, Mr. Springbrook, who also echoes the sentiment by referring to the group of students as “assholes.”

The most visible display of pleasure based on the demise of students is in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978). Dean Wormer is so happy to read the news that members of the Delta Chi Tau fraternity have failed their mid-term exams that he kisses his secretary on the forehead. Later, with a mix of anger and pleasure, he suspends the students and informs them that they are now eligible for the draft and military service. He states the following:

You're out. Finished at Faber. Expelled. I want you off this campus at 9 o'clock Monday morning. And I'm sure you'll be happy to know that I notified your local draft boards and told them that you are now all eligible for military service.

Dean Wormer grins as he tells the young men that they will now be eligible for the draft. Again and again, administrators in films repeatedly take pleasure in seeing students suffer.

Although most of the sadistic behavior portrayed in films is directed at students, faculty members are not immune. In *The Nutty Professor* (1996), Dean Richmond shows pleasure in dismissing Professor Klump from his position at the university.

You see, chubby, you're not only fired from this institution, but I'm going to make sure you never get hired by any of the colleges in the state, country, the world, maybe even the universe. Unless, of course, they're looking for teachers on planet fat.

Similarly, Dean Yager in *Ghostbusters* (1984) has a smug smile on his face as he dismisses faculty members from the institution and tells them that they are to “vacate the premises.”

In addition to the character development and verbal statements of the administrators in these films, there are other visual and auditory clues in the scenes that

convey the enjoyment administrators derive from the suffering of others. In *Old School* (2003), Dean Pritchard's malice towards others is visually depicted by the décor and accessories in his office. The pictures on Pritchard's desk and throughout his office depict him in hunting scenarios where he has killed animals in the name of sport. A magnifying glass on his desk is constructed from an animal body part (see Figure 13), and his desk set is made from an animal skin, perhaps that of an alligator. The message is clear that Dean Pritchard is comfortable hunting and killing animals and probably derives enjoyment from it.

The vindictive behavior of the administrators in these films and the scene elements that portray those characteristics illustrate a group of leaders who are motivated by emotions as opposed to ethics (George, 2000). Ethical leadership is marked by respect

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Figure 13. In *Old School* (2003), Dean Pritchard's desk accessories give an indication of his comfort in hunting and killing animals.

for and by others that garners authority and power (Beauchamp & Bowie, 2004).

Administrators in these films are repeatedly expressing strong, negative emotions, typically anger. They express these negative emotions in inappropriate and hurtful ways and rely solely on their positions of authority (George, 2000), rather than earning the respect and admiration of their subordinates. Their obvious pleasure in seeing harm come to others demonstrates their lack of emotional control.

Administrators Mistreating Student Assistants

Mistreatment of support staff, students, and faculty by administrators is also portrayed when administrators interact with the students who assist them. A common relationship in films is to have a helpful student assist the administrator with his or her work. These student assistants serve as informal apprentices and only appear in films where administrators are engaged in negative activities. These student assistants serve to as antagonists along with the administrators. For example, the student assistant, Michael in *Old School* (2003) helps Dean Pritchard meet and bribe a student, Megan, as a means of getting rid of a fraternity on campus. Dean Pritchard shows hostility toward Michael as Michael tries to help Pritchard. Pritchard says angrily, "I'm sorry. Is that funny? Are you a stand-up comic? Is that what you do now?" He then callously pushes Michael out of the office, and says, "This is me leaving. This is me leaving." Greg Marmalard in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978) is another student assistant who helps Dean Wormer to antagonize and get rid of the Delta Tau Chi House through a variety of devious actions. Later, Dean Wormer says to Marmalard, "Cut the horseshit, son!" In a later clip, he grabs him by the collar and yells, "What the fuck is going on down there?" In like manner, Hoyt Ambrose is a student assistant in *Accepted* (2006) who helps Dean

Van Horne shut down the fake college that had opened on the land where Dean Van Horne wants to expand his own campus. Dean Van Horne barks at Hoyt Ambrose, “Tell me that you’re not that naive.” Another administrator in *Accepted* (2006), Dean Lewis, yells at a student assistant who is attempting to help him and calls him an “idiot.”

Even though there is extensive abuse of students from administrators, students continue to serve happily. Moreover, the student assistants are constantly praising the administrators. For example, Hoyt Ambrose in *Accepted* (2006) says, “You’re right. You’re right, sir,” after being scolded by Dean Van Horne. Later, Ambrose must run alongside Dean Van Horne’s golf cart as the dean is driven on campus in order to speak to him (see Figure 14). Regardless of their treatment, student assistants blindly follow the administrators they admire.

In the student-administrator relationships portrayed here, a form of leadership modeling is occurring. Administrators demonstrate behaviors for students to emulate (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002), and, as leaders, they are models (Kouzes & Posner, 2003; Senge, 1990) for students to become dysfunctional and unethical in problem-solving. In these cases, the administrators serve as teachers of negative behaviors. This sentiment is reaffirmed in a conversation between Dean Van Horne in *Accepted* (2006) and student assistant, Hoyt Ambrose. When Ambrose begins to overlook the ethical violations of the situation, Dean Van Horne praises his willingness to take unethical actions and replies, “That’s the kind of thinking that will get you into law school.” When administrators in films work with students, they lead students toward unprofessional, inappropriate, and unethical actions.

Graphic redacted. Paper copy available upon request to home institution.

Figure 14. Student, Hoyt Ambrose, runs alongside Dean Van Horne's golf cart in order to have a conversation in the film *Accepted* (2006).

Administrators Using Profanity

Another example of the negative behaviors of administrators is displayed in the use of profanity. Administrators repeatedly use profanity in a variety of situations. Martin Hansen from *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) says, "Shit." Dean Pritchard in *Old School* (2003) says, "Oh, shit," and Mr. Springbrook refers to students as "assholes." Dean Wormer in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978) says "horseshit," "shit," and "fuck." Dean Lewis in *Accepted* (2006) says, "horseshit," "shitter," "shit," "ass," "fucking A!" and "f****d", with the word bleeped out and a tone over the audio. Sara Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000) says, "Fuck you." In *How High* (2001), Dean Cain says, "Fuck you," "mother-fucker," and "bitch," and Chancellor Huntley says, "ass." Dean

Uhlich in *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984) says, “asshole.”

Administrators in films frequently use profanity to express their feelings. Although exaggerated language is a technique used to extend the entertainment and dramatic effect of the moment in the films, the use of profanity is consistent across a variety of genres. The portrayal of administrators using this type of language represents leaders who are unable to control their emotions (George, 2000).

Profanity is an outward signal of emotions that are controlling the behavior and decisions of a leader rather than logic and strategic thinking controlling their behavior (George, 2000; McCaffery, 2004). As Kouzes and Posner (2003) affirmed, the behaviors of leaders must be the model others are to follow. Using profanity or showing emotional distress not only limits a leader’s authority (George, 2000) but also her or his credibility as a leader (Kouzes & Posner, 2003; McCaffery, 2004). The use of profanity and the display of intense emotion by administrators show a lack of emotional intelligence (George; 2000) and a lack of quality communication (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) that are essential to effective higher-education leadership. Leaders, especially educational leaders, must choose their words carefully in each leadership context (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Even though irritations in the work of an administrator will always occur (Greenstreet, 2010), letting anger flow out by way of profanity is never helpful (McCaffery, 2004).

Administrators Questioning Faculty

A prominent domain identified in the data analysis is the administrators’ questioning of the practices of faculty members. In two films, *Drumline* (2002) and *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), the presidents of the institutions question the curriculum and

teaching choices of the faculty. President Wagner in *Drumline* (2002) repeatedly questions the musical choices of the university's band director. When the band director, Dr. Lee, tells President Wagner, "I'll continue with the overall direction of the program," President Wagner responds, "that direction is a losing one." Later President Wagner threatens to end the program if his musical choices are not followed. President Wagner rejects the idea of putting the educational needs of the students first. When Lee advocates for the education of students by observing, "Our first obligation is to educate and then entertain," Wagner responds by arguing that the need to satisfy alumni wishes and court their donations is paramount to the program.

In *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), President Carr has concerns with a new professor, Katherine Watson, and her teaching of the visual arts. She tells Professor Watson, "I've been getting some calls about your teaching methods, Katherine." At the end of the film, President Carr demands that Professor Watson submit her lesson plans for review. The film portrays President Carr resisting the changes within contemporary art during the early 1950s. This resistance is analogous to questioning the evolving mores of American culture in that time period.

In addition to teaching methods and curriculum, the portrayals depict administrators having a tight rein on the research of faculty members. Administrators in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), *The Nutty Professor* (1996), *Flubber* (1997), and *How High* (2001) all express an interest in faculty research as a means of financial benefit. Dean Yager in *Ghostbusters* (1984) criticizes the research of one faculty member and declares, "Your theories are the worst kind of popular tripe; your methods are sloppy, and your conclusions are highly questionable. You are a poor scientist, Dr.

Venkman.”

As discussed in the literature review, administrators and faculty members in higher education often find difficulty in collaborating and supporting healthy, working relationships. A chasm often exists between the wishes and desires of the faculty and those of the administration. Dalbey (1994) characterized the mistrust as “abounding” (p. 38) while Delamont (1998) raised the division to a level of “anguish and fury” (p. 475). Trust and collaboration between leaders and constituent groups (Olson, 2006) are missing in most of the administrator portrayals in these films.

Administrators Devaluing Teaching

Another negative leadership quality is portrayed when administrators in films send messages that teaching should be a low priority for faculty members. In these films, administrators often convey the idea that teaching is the least important of the faculty’s responsibilities. For example, Dean Yager in *Ghostbusters* (1984) reacts negatively to the idea that the students support Dr. Venkman’s teaching. Dr. Venkman argues that his students like his work.

Dean Yager: This University will no longer continue any funding of any kind for your group’s activities.

Dr. Venkman: But the kids love us.

Dean Yager [with an expression of disgust]: Dr. Venkman, we believe that the purpose of science is to serve mankind. You, however, seem to regard science as some kind of dodge or hustle.

Dean Yager dismisses Dr. Venkman, not on the grounds of his teaching effectiveness, but based on the quality of his research. Yager goes on to kick the faculty members off campus without any mention or regard for their teaching responsibilities. In *The Nutty Professor* (1996), Dean Richmond does not seem disturbed that Professor Klump is 20 minutes late to class and was not in class the time before. Klump says, “Dean Richmond.

Oh, hello, sir. You caught me in the middle of an experiment. I was, uh, I was trying to see how the students would respond to teacher-less environments.” Dean Richmond replies, “Interesting. Always thinking. That’s good, Klump. Let me know your results.” Dean Richmond then changes the subject and does not address Klump’s absence from class.

Flubber (1997) portrays another example of administrators in films favoring the work of research at the expense of teaching. Philip Brainard, a science faculty member, enters a figure-drawing classroom and begins lecturing on chemistry. Philip’s ineptness in all things except his research is never addressed by the school’s only visible administrator, his love interest, President Reynolds. In fact, Philip’s teaching responsibilities at the school are never mentioned.

A third example of the mentality that teaching is a low priority is in the dramatic film *The Visitor* (2007). Walter, an economics faculty member, is pressured to attend a conference and present his research. Charles approaches Walter to leave his class to attend the conference:

Charles knocks on the door of Walter’s office.
 Charles [Wringing his hands]: Walter, Shelly can’t make it down to the NYU conference to present your paper. I’m going to need you to cover for her.
 Walter: Why can’t she go?
 Charles: She’s been put on bed rest until she has the baby.
 Walter: I wish I could, but now’s not a good time, Charles.
 Charles: Well, I understand, but you co-authored the paper, and the Dean wants it presented. He wants to keep Shelly on track for tenure.
 Walter: I just don’t think I can with the start of classes and my book.
 Charles: You’re only teaching one class, Walter.
 Walter: So I can stay focused on my book. Charles, I would really rather not go.
 Charles: Well, I’m sorry, but there really isn’t another option at this point.

While at the conference, Walter becomes involved in an immigration matter and is out of town for several weeks. Although Walter checks in with Charles, there is no mention of

the several weeks Walter is away from his class. Regardless of genre, films send a message to audiences that the work of teaching is a low priority for administrators.

Administrators Succumbing to the Pressures of Others

Films continually show administrators under the strain of internal and external pressures from a variety of sources. The strongest political group that is repeatedly seen influencing administrators is alumni. Alumni, as a constituent group, are ever-present in films during alumni social events as in the films, *The Nutty Professor* (1996) and *How High* (2001), or during major homecoming activities, as featured in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978) and in *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984). The depiction of ceremonial activities on campus is symbolic of the inherent power attributed to alumni. The power of alumni even extends into instructional activities, as in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003). The alumnae in the film have input into curriculum and in the hiring and firing of faculty members:

President Carr: I spent the better part of Friday afternoon trying to convince the alumnae that your record was impeccable, that you would no longer provide contraceptive devices, and that you would be willing to make a public statement to that effect.

Amanda: I'm not willing to make a public statement.

President Carr: It doesn't matter, Amanda. We're letting you go. It's out of my hands.

Carr admits that the pressure of the alumnae is too great to keep a long-time faculty member employed. Instead, she gives in to the political force to fire her. In a later clip, the alumnae begin to dictate to the academic leadership by asking President Carr to supervise a faculty member's instruction closely. An alumna demands, "She would have to promise to turn in her lesson plans." A second alumna adds, "in advance," followed by a third alumna stating, "and they need to be approved." In this film, the alumnae have

the power to control the course content, and the administrator and faculty appear to have little control over the process.

This level of alumni pressure is echoed in *Drumline* (2002). The president of the university, Wagner, implores a faculty member to perform the type of music that the alumni will like. He tells the faculty member, “There won’t be a program if the alumni continue to lose interest. We win; they write checks. Dr. Henderson was smart enough to know that. He played popular music.” Wagner identifies one of the strengths of alumni, their financial support, and Wagner leverages that strength to persuade the faculty member to comply. In *The Nutty Professor* (1996), Dean Richmond works to win funding from alumni and states, “Hartley is the last rich alumnus we’ve got, and he’s a science fan.”

These films depict other sources of pressure on administrators. Higher-level administrators repeatedly apply pressure to mid-level administrators. In *The Visitor* (2007), Charles, a department chair, is caught between the needs of the dean and the wishes of Walter, a faculty member. Charles approaches Walter to help out a colleague:

Walter: Charles, the truth is, this is really Shelly’s paper. I just agreed to co-author because she asked me to. I’m not really prepared to present it.
Charles: Now look, Walter, you can take it up with the dean if you like, but I wouldn’t advise it. Not with that argument.

This type of pressure from superiors is also experienced by Dean Pritchard in *Old School* (2003) as he explains to his student helper, “The board members are beginning to ask questions.” Later in the film, Dean Pritchard’s supervisor, Mr. Springbrook, pressures Dean Pritchard when he asks him, “So is this thing going to go down smooth or what? I’m missing 18 holes of golf here.” Administrators are often squeezed between the needs of their superiors and those of the faculty and students (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999).

Administrators in these films are never seen questioning the decisions of their superiors.

Another example of pressure from constituent groups occurs in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978). The mayor of the town, DePasto, is clearly in political control of Dean Wormer and pressures Wormer to agree to pay the town to hold the homecoming parade. The mayor threatens Wormer with physical harm if he mentions that DePasto is trying to force him to pay:

Dean Wormer: I don't think it is right that you should extort money from the college.

Mayor DePasto: Look, as the mayor of Faber, I've got big responsibilities. These parades are very expensive. You're using my police, my sanitation people, my free Oldsmobile. So, if you mention extortion again, I'll have your legs broken.

Constituent groups regularly apply pressure to motivate an administrator to act in a way she or he may not desire.

These political pressures are often felt by leaders. However, administrators also use external pressures to meet their goals by forming partnerships (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). The films *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) and *Drumline* (2002) portray administrators partnering with the alumni to form political alliances. In *The Visitor* (2007), Charles uses the dean as his political partner to persuade the faculty to comply with his wishes.

The pressures on academic leaders are frequently an effort to maintain the status quo (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; McCaffery, 2004). This pressure is illustrated by the alumnae and President Carr in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), who work to maintain the current curriculum. The portrayals consistently show administrators surrendering to the pressures of others. However, effective educational leaders must face political pressures to effect positive change (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Administrators in films are never seen challenging political powers or allying

with constituent groups to facilitate change. Only through facing the pressures head on can leaders work to turn around the political forces (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2003) and lead within the organization.

Administrators Being Inept

In most cases, administrators in films fail to maintain a level of credible competence. Administrators are routinely shown as incapable of achieving their intended objectives. This display of incompetence is common in films when the administrator loses to the protagonist of the film, as in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), *Old School* (2003), and *Accepted* (2006). This incompetence is shown in other, more subtle ways as well. For example, Walter Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000) mispronounces the title of a book recently published by a student. In *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), Marcus Brody supplies comedic relief with continuous gaffs. Brody often appears confused and disoriented (see Figure 15). At one point, Indiana Jones admits to his father, "You know, Marcus. He got lost once in his own museum." Another example of ineptness is in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978) when Dean Wormer is not even aware of the disciplinary actions he has already initiated and must be reminded by a student that the Delta Tau Chi fraternity is currently on probation. Hence, Dean Wormer creatively decrees the famous line that the Delta fraternity is now on "double secret probation."

Developing and maintaining competence is crucial to successful leadership because capability and expertise aid in providing organizational power to a leader (Katz, 1974; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; McCaffery, 2004). Leaders must convey a high level of competence and intelligence and must maintain a high level of expertise in their field

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Figure 15. This clip from *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) depicts Marcus Brody as confused by the events going on around him, a behavior repeated throughout the film.

(Katz, 1974). The repeatedly portrayed incompetence of administrators in these films erodes confidence and trust in higher-educational leadership.

Administrators Relying on Rules

These films provide another example of negative behavior with administrators repeatedly relying on rules and policies to do their work as opposed to addressing the real issues. Dean Van Horne in *Accepted* (2006) contests a new school in his neighborhood by citing accreditation policies. When a student, Bartleby Gaines, organizes a school for people who were not admitted into other institutions, Dean Van Horne immediately turns to shutting the school down. Van Horne tells a group of students and parents:

It is a sham. A fraud that undermines the efforts of existing colleges everywhere, and I invite you to confirm that with the state board of accreditation. For all the

students who have been duped, good luck applying for schools next year. And to Mr. Gaines, I say you will be hearing from our attorneys.

Later, Dean Van Horne accuses a student of criminal activity for creating the college and instigates a review by the state's department of education. The result of Dean Van Horne's use of the rules is that the new school is given accreditation on a probationary basis. In place of attempting to work collaboratively with the school to reach an agreement, Dean Van Horne fails in his task of trying to oust the new school.

Dean Wormer in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978) is another example of an administrator using rules to do his work. He refers to the Faber College constitution and a "little codicil" as his primary grounds for seeking to disband the Delta Tau Chi fraternity. He tells the group of students, "Looks like somebody forgot there's a rule against alcoholic beverages in fraternities on probation." As opposed to building an argument based on the behavior of the students, Dean Wormer relies on the authority of institutional policies to bring about changes.

In addition to using rules to do their work, administrators are often pressured by students to use rules. In four of the analyzed films, students attempt to persuade administrators to use policies and rules in order to get action. In *Social Network* (2010), Tyler Winklevoss reminds President Larry Summers, "Sir, it's against university rules to steal from another student, plain and simple." In *The House Bunny* (2008), a student named Ashley tells Dean Mooney, "Rules are rules. Time to pound on that gavel. Pound that gavel, Dean." The student insists that the dean uphold the rules to shut down a rival sorority. In *Urban Legend* (1998), Paul, a journalism student, tries to keep his job after he writes about safety concerns on campus. After Dean Adams notifies Paul that he has been fired, Paul tells Dean Adams that, according to the school charter, the dean does not

have the power to fire a student journalist. Paul points out to the dean, “You can’t do that. Okay? Read the charter. The dean can’t dictate editorial policy.” In place of addressing the safety concern on campus that Paul has publicized, Dean Adams uses rules to have Paul fired. Moreover, the student himself cites the rules in an attempt to reverse the decision. In *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984), the students cite the Greek Council charter as grounds to deny membership to a new fraternity. Dean Uhlich suggests he is powerless to deviate from the rules and states, “I’m afraid he’s [the student is] right.” These portrayals of administrators represent a non-example of leadership. In all of these examples, the administrators use rules and policies as opposed to addressing the deeper issues.

Administrators in films also use rules as an excuse not to help others. When Dean Durkett in *Orange County* (2002) is approached by a student who was not admitted to Stanford University because of a mistake by his high-school guidance counselor, Durkett cites the admissions process as the rule he must follow. He says to the student, “If I had this [the student’s transcript] by January 21st, you might have had a shot.” Durkett goes on to tell the prospective student that he will not be admitted because of this rule. In *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), President Carr uses the rules to justify the dismissal of a faculty member and cites the justification to fire the professor, stating, “She broke the law.” In these examples, administrators are focused only on adhering to current rules rather than exploring options to solve fundamental problems.

Administrators in films typically use the rules out of an emotional need, such as anger or jealousy. Academic leaders must not let emotions rule their actions (George, 2000; Greenstreet, 2010). Beyond simply following rules, administrators in films use

policies and rules as a form of “active obstruction” (Olson, 2006, p. 2). In films, administrators are reacting to events as opposed to creating a proactive stance and engaging in leadership behaviors to rectify problems (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

Academic leaders need to have a vision for change and share that vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Instead, most portrayals suggest a “blame-the-bureaucracy perspective” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 38) that restricts the institution’s ability to re-organize, adapt, and grow to meet changing demands. It is the role of the academic leader to challenge and change a process in the best interest of the institution and the constituent groups (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

Administrators Using Formal Proceedings

In films, administrators’ use of rules often escalates into a formal trial or hearing. The proceedings in films are frequent and typically include an administrator as the participant or leader of the process. Many times, the administrator will deviate from due process to promote her or his self-interest. In *National Lampoon’s Animal House* (1978), Dean Wormer officiates over a probationary trial of the Delta Tau Chi fraternity but provides no opportunity for the students to defend their actions. In *Accepted* (2006), Dean Van Horne uses an accreditation hearing to prevent the establishment of a new college in his institution’s neighborhood. In *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984), Dean Uhlich presides over a trial process to grant students a fraternity charter. The Greek Council President cites the rules for sponsorship and states, “I’m sorry to inform you that your membership has been denied.” Dean Uhlich agrees and comments, “I’m afraid he’s right,” and thus prevents the students from starting a fraternity. Like rules, trials and proceedings represent a mechanism that is often used not to lead but to uphold the

bureaucratic process (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Administrators Ousting Students and Faculty

The films depict administrators using a combination of rules and formal proceedings to discharge a member of the institution. A repeated focus of films is the effort of administrators attempting to expel a student or group of students. For example, Dean Pritchard in *Old School* (2003) announces to a fraternity that they are expelled from the institution. Using a video recording sent to the students, Pritchard announces:

Not only will your house be repossessed, but those of you who are students will be expelled from the University for your participation in a non-sanctioned fraternity. Please take a moment to allow this information to sink in.

Dean Pritchard nonverbally conveys enjoyment as he tells students the news of their dismissal. Pritchard's supervisor, Mr. Springbrook, shares this sentiment: "I'm going to enjoy kicking these assholes off campus." Dean Pritchard replies, "Ditto." Another example of expelling students is Dean Wormer in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978). He spends the entire film working to oust the Delta Tau Chi fraternity and its members and says to the students when they have finally been expelled:

You're out. Finished at Faber. Expelled. I want you off this campus at 9 o'clock Monday morning. And I'm sure you'll be happy to know that I notified your local draft boards and told them that you are now all eligible for military service.

In *How High* (2001), the ousting of students is also modeled by Dean Cain of Harvard University. He tells two new scholarship students:

And as for you two, ever since you arrived on this campus, there have been several mishaps. Now my instincts tell me it's you. But I can't prove it. Not yet. But, I know if I give you enough time, pretty soon, you're going to slip up, and then I'll be able to send you back to your miserable existence.

These examples represent the intense focus of higher-education administrators on expelling others by using tools at their disposal. In place of targeting individual students

for elimination from the institution, administrators in films most often pursue whole sets of students, for example, members of a fraternity or sorority. This type of pursuit occurs in *The House Bunny* (2008), *How High* (2001), *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002), *Old School* (2003), and *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984). In a similar manner, Dean Van Horne in *Accepted* (2006) tries to dissolve an entire school.

Expulsion is the highest punishment for any student, and many administrators in these films pursue this ultimate penalty. Dean Wormer in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978) is the only administrator who successfully is able to expel students from the institution. In the other cases, the students win out over the administrator and maintain their student group and membership in the institution.

Sometimes the desire to expel students is motivated by the pressure of other students. Students urge the dismissal of other students in *The House Bunny* (2008) and *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002). In *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002), a student, Bags, tries to convince Dean Mooney of the necessity to expel his fellow student, Van Wilder. Bags tells Dean Mooney, "He broke a rule. He should pay the consequences." Ultimately, Dean Mooney follows due process and holds a vote at the hearing board to determine Van Wilder's eligibility to stay in college. Mooney states, "Let's take a vote. There's five of us here. Majority rules."

Students are not the only ones who are forced to leave an institution for wrongdoing. Displeased with the quality of research they are doing, Dean Yager in *Ghostbusters* (1984) dismisses faculty members, Dr. Peter Venkman, Dr. Raymond Stantz, and Dr. Egon Spengler. For similar reasons, Dean Richmond in *The Nutty*

Professor (1996) angrily fires Professor Sherman Klump. President Carr in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) dislikes the content and manner of Professor Katherine Ann Watson's teaching so much that she creates an intolerable work setting that finally forces Professor Watson to resign.

In the above examples, administrators are not acting to provide corrective action for faculty or students by way of discipline, coaching, or mentoring (McCaffery, 2004). These administrators choose to send the students or faculty members out of the organization as opposed to working to correct and improve the behaviors of the student or faculty member. Fostering the capabilities of members of an organization is an essential leadership practice (Collins, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; Levi, 2001; McCaffery, 2004; Senge, 1990). In *Good to Great* (2001), Jim Collins outlined the need for leaders to be "rigorous, not ruthless" (p. 51) in their hiring, managing, and firing of employees. Dean Richmond in *The Nutty Professor* (1996) is certainly ruthless when he fires Professor Klum and tells him, "You see, chubby, you're not only fired from this institution, but I'm going to make sure you never get hired by any of the colleges in the state, country, the world, maybe even the universe." Administrators in the selected films are never shown maintaining rigor and helping students or faculty to improve the quality of their work; instead, they ruthlessly move students and faculty members out of the institution if those individuals fail to meet their expectations.

Administrators Being Pretentious

A major domain identified in the data from the analyzed films is the pretentiousness of administrators. Administrators in films routinely mention the high quality and standards of their institutions. Four films take place at Harvard University—

How High (2001), *Legally Blonde* (2001), *Social Network* (2010), and *The Great Debaters* (2007)—and include examples of this pretentious behavior. Each of these films contains comments from administrators regarding the prestige of Harvard University. In *Legally Blonde* (2001), the Head of Admissions for Harvard Law School appears bewildered at the thought that the admissions committee is considering a “fashion major” as an applicant. He argues that a student with a 4.0 grade point average from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), is not a qualified candidate for Harvard Law School. In *The Great Debaters* (2007), the Dean of Students of Harvard University speaks before a group where he brags about the institution’s “grand” and “austere” history. Chancellor Huntley of Harvard University in *How High* (2001) tells a prospective student, “We have the finest botany department in the world.” This sentiment is reiterated in the same film by Dean Cain when he tells prospective students that “Harvard isn’t for everyone.” In the docu-drama *Social Network* (2010), Larry Summers, once the actual President of Harvard University, states that the concerns of two students are “not worthy of Harvard.” Again and again, these administrators communicate a high degree of elitism about their institutions.

Even though Harvard University is the institution that is most often portrayed as pretentious, it is not the only institution whose administrators boast about the superiority of their schools. In *Accepted* (2006), Dean Van Horne tells a student, “Mr. Ambrose, do you know what makes Harmon a great college? Rejection. The exclusivity of any university is judged primarily by the amount of students it rejects.” Dean Van Horne later asserts that the educational experience of his “real college” is better than any other possible educational experience. He tells students from a neighboring school, “Your

phony school demeans real colleges everywhere.”

Although enthusiasm and pride in the organization can be a positive force to encourage colleagues and constituents to rally around the efforts of the organization (Collins, 2001), conceit can stymie trust and communication (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Rath & Conchie, 2008). Heifetz and Linsky (2002) acknowledged that, “arrogance is a form of losing your heart in leadership” (p. 227). Holding the name and value of the organization above the needs of constituent groups diminishes the opportunity for the institution to serve and grow. Even though some element of pride in an organization is an important component to the culture of the organization (Deal & Kennedy, 1982), taking this to a level of arrogance is problematic in leadership (Smothers, Bing, White, Trocchia, & Absher, 2011).

These displays of pretentiousness are intensified by the settings and décor within many of the films. Institutions of higher learning in films are consistently shown as ostentatious spaces. The offices of administrators in films are consistently grandiose in nature. Most administrators in films have very large, ornately decorated offices featuring wood paneling, vintage leather furniture, brass fixtures, antiques, hardwood bookcases filled with leather-bound books, tall ceilings, ornate paintings of influential White men, oriental rugs, and large desks. The office of President Carr in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) is typical of the pretentiousness conveyed in films. President Carr’s office resembles a historic mansion with wood paneling and furniture, parquet floors, and a meeting table that seats 12. In addition to pretentious décor, her office has the added feature of religious symbolism. The long, narrow muntin bars on the window create the shadow of Christian crosses (see Figure 16). There are several pieces of antique furniture, paintings,

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Figure 16. President Carr's office in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) uses strong Christian imagery. Note the shadow of a Christian cross visible behind the window curtains that is created by the window muntin bars.

and sculptures, as is evident in several other administrator offices, and there is a fireplace opposite President Carr's desk.

The one non-exemplar of the pretentious offices of administrators is seen in *Accepted* (2006). In stark contrast to the predominant décor of administrators' offices in films, Dean Lewis's office is almost the exact opposite (see Figure 17). His office is located on the make-shift campus of South Harmon Institute of Technology, where a condemned building for a mental institution has been rehabilitated into a college. Dean Lewis's office is stark and cold. The walls are made of concrete block that has been painted with two shades of blue, and a brown stripe runs horizontally around the room. There are several large windows with horizontal shades, and the room is populated with

metallic, institutional furniture. The look and feel of the space is cold and contemporary.

Graphic redacted. Paper copy available upon request to home institution.

Figure 17. In *Accepted* (2006), Dean Lewis's office is cold and stark with no antique furniture or high-end furnishings. The Rorschach test gives a hint to the previous inhabitants, as the college was previously a condemned building of a mental institution.

It is visually the opposite of the other administrators' offices in the films analyzed.

Administrators Reacting to Questions by Faculty and Students

The work of administrators in films is repeatedly questioned by faculty members and students. Most often, the criticism or questioning of an administrator comes from a faculty member. For example, Indiana and Henry Jones verbalize their doubt in the abilities of Marcus Brody in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989). John Nash expresses misgivings regarding his friend and department chair Martin Hansen in *A*

Beautiful Mind (2001). Dr. Venkman demands that Dean Yager explain his actions in *Ghostbusters* (1984), and Katherine Ann Watson questions President Carr's motives in firing a colleague in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003). The questioning of specific decisions by administrators leads to questioning the overall quality of their leadership.

Students also question administrators. Bartleby Gaines questions the decision-making ability of Dr. Alexander in *Accepted* (2006); the Winklevoss twins question President Larry Summers's judgment in *Social Network* (2010), and Dean Wormer is repeatedly challenged by members of the Delta Tau Chi fraternity in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978). Like faculty, students in films find the work of administrators suspect.

The reaction of administrators to the question of faculty and students is frequently hostile. When a student expresses doubt in the authenticity of the hearing that Dean Wormer is officiating in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), Wormer replies, "You will speak when you're told to speak and not before. Not another word." Wormer's response is typical of administrators in the films analyzed. Upon hearing criticism from others, administrators typically do not make changes but rather reply with anger.

The authoritarian and task-oriented leadership of administrators in these films invariably leads to a lack of both trust and support from others (Dalbey, 1994; Delamont, 1998; Rath & Conchie, 2008). Although questioning by subordinates can be a part of a healthy working relationship, the responses to these expressed concerns is either apathy or negativism. Because individuals are motivated in the workplace by both social and psychological interests (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939), responses to concerns need to

be respected. The need for respect and understanding is a basic human desire that is fundamental in all working relationships (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Effective leaders must listen to their subordinates in order to gain knowledge and insight about the workings of the organization, as well as to provide appreciation (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Moreover, this process enables a leader to face the hard truths about the effectiveness of the organization (Collins, 2001). Blanchard (2004) affirmed that feedback is “the breakfast of champions” (p. 10) for good leaders. Only in rare cases are administrators in these films shown seeking the input of others.

Administrators Involved Romantically with Faculty

Another negative quality exhibited by administrators in the films analyzed is the tendency to engage in romantic relationships with subordinates. Of the three female administrators, two are high-level administrators involved in romantic relationships with male faculty members: Sara Jean Reynolds, President of Medfield College in *Flubber* (1997), and Sara Gaskell, chancellor of an unnamed university in *Wonder Boys* (2000). The plot of each of film centers on the desire of the female administrator to be in a long-term, committed relationship and the inability of the faculty member to capitulate. Adding to the complexity of the situation, Chancellor Sara Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* is married to another administrator at the institution and is romantically and sexually involved with a faculty member who is also currently married. None of the male administrators in these films is involved romantically with anyone besides his spouse.

Maintaining effective working relationships is essential for quality leadership to occur (Bolman & Deal, 2003; McCaffery, 2004; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). For administrators in these films, relationships generally fall into three categories, all of

which include either a lack of emotion or extreme emotion. The administrators have intense anger or disdain toward others, complete apathy, or are involved romantically with colleagues. In all three cases, each relationship lacks the type of trustworthiness and regard necessary to work effectively with others (Dalbey, 1994; Delamont, 1998; George, 2000; Rath & Conchie, 2008).

Aggression toward Administrators

The negative leadership qualities portrayed in these films lead to direct, negative views of their behaviors held by other characters. As a result, administrators are often the recipient of negative attitudes and actions. These actions range from subtle threats, to physical harm, to homicide.

Threats toward Administrators

The negativism toward administrators in films often manifests into threats. For example, Dean Uhlich is physically threatened by the Adams College football coach in *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984). Coach Harris lunges towards Uhlich and asks, “Says who?” Uhlich, in a defining moment of the film, finally stands up to the bullying coach and responds, “Says me, you asshole!” This reply prompts the coach to lunge at Dean Uhlich to harm him physically. Harris’s actions do not result, however, in any harm to Uhlich. Similarly, Dean Richmond in *The Nutty Professor* (1996) has his life threatened by Buddy Love, the alter-ego of Professor Klump. Buddy Love says to Richmond:

Man, you ever talk to me like that again, I’ll kill you. I don’t mean that as a euphemism. I mean that I’m going to literally kill you. I’m going to strangle you and cut off YOUR air supply until you pass away.

Buddy Love's threat uses the exact language with which Dean Richmond threatens Professor Klump earlier in the film. The threat of physical harm becomes more apparent in *Accepted* (2006) when a student blows up Dean Van Horne's car as Van Horne is approaching it. Even administrators threaten each other. In *Accepted* (2006), Dean Lewis tells Dean Van Horne, "Hey, why don't you take your Ph. D. and shove it up your A. S. S.?" Dean Lewis then charges toward Dean Van Horne as if to physically harm him.

Physical Harm to Administrators

Threats are only the beginning of negative actions directed toward administrators. Several administrators in these films are physically harmed. The physical actions against administrators begin with small incidents. For example, Dean Richmond in *The Nutty Professor* (1996) sips coffee in which a gerbil has repeatedly defecated while a faculty member watches and does not warn him. In two cases, administrators are drugged without their knowledge. Dean Durkett in *Orange County* (2002) is given illegal drugs in place of Excedrin and becomes cognitively altered after taking "three hits." In *How High* (2001), Dean Cain eats brownies that he is not aware contain marijuana. The brownies are given to Cain as a prank by two students from the university. Later in the film, Dean Cain becomes disoriented as the marijuana takes effect and acts out at a university social event.

Administrators are also physically harmed by others. In *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), a car rams into the grandstand where Dean Wormer is sitting. The crash topples the grandstand and leaves Dean Wormer

lying in a heap of rubble. In *How High* (2001), Dean Cain is shot with a taser gun after attempting to attack a student with an ax.

Homicide of Administrators

In two films, administrators are killed. Dean Pritchard in *Old School* (2003) is killed when a car falls off a bridge and onto him as he is fly fishing in a river. The car lands on top of Dean Pritchard, crushes him, and then explodes. The most graphic violent act toward an administrator comes in the only horror film included in the analysis. Dean Adams in *Urban Legend* (1998) is brutally murdered (see Figure 18). His Achilles tendon is cut by an unknown assailant. Then, as Dean Adams is trying to crawl away, the assailant releases the parking brake of the dean's car and the car rolls on top of Dean Adams as he is trying to cross over the tire shredders in the parking garage. The car pushes Dean Adams's body onto the spikes of the shredder, killing him. Although the

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home institution.

Figure 18. Dean Adams in *Urban Legend* (1998) is killed when an unknown assailant cuts his Achilles tendon and then proceeds to roll the Dean's car over him in a parking garage.

deaths of the two administrators are not linked to a specific behavior, both films imply that the negative actions of the administrators justify the violence towards them. Because both Dean Pritchard's and Dean Adam's leadership behaviors are so negative, their deaths become a form of retribution.

Based on the negative behaviors exhibited by administrators, it is not surprising that people around these leaders often react negatively. Administrators often act with hostility and violence in films, but the reaction of others is exponentially greater. Leaders, no matter their behavior or position, will often be a target for anger and hostility as they begin to effect change. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) affirmed that leaders must "stomach hostility" in order to connect to individuals and to work in a leadership role (p. 18). Kouzes and Posner (2003) referred to this idea as the "psychological hardness" (p. 59) that is necessary when confronting different opinions and even aggressive behavior.

The hostile reaction of leadership is illustrated by the physical aggression toward Dean Wormer in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978). Even though he is single-mindedly focused on ridding the school of a certain fraternity, he is challenging the status quo and, thus, is providing leadership. Dean Wormer's decision to put the students on "double secret probation" is the inciting incident (Kincaid, 2002) that grows into the plot climax when members of the fraternity ram a car into the grandstand that holds Dean Wormer, Mrs. Wormer, Mayor DePasto, and Mrs. DePasto. Wrong or right, this leadership act of trying to change the current environment results in anger directed at him. If Dean Wormer had continued to tolerate the anti-social behaviors of the Delta Tau Chi fraternity, the fraternity might have continued its debaucherous ways without harm to the Dean.

Major Themes

Based on the films analyzed, there is limited evidence of effective leadership being portrayed in American films. As a whole, administrators do not show the visionary leadership necessary to guide institutions of higher education (Kouzes & Posner, 2003; McCaffery, 2004). Instead, leaders are primarily reactive to the events around them. They react to disruptive students, pressures from constituent groups, a lack of resources, or challenges to the good name of the institution.

Descriptions and interpretations within the analytic domains were synthesized so that five major themes were identified: promoting the prestige of the institution, finding money, adhering to rules, expelling undesirables, and serving oneself. Each theme overlaps and is connected with the others, and collectively they represent the focus of administrators' goals across the films viewed (see Figure 19). The following section provides an analysis of these five major themes.

Expelling Undesirables

The first major theme of administrators in films is the goal of ridding the institution of undesirables. In place of facing problems and working through conflicts, the answer for film administrators is to get rid of the problems. This effort usually results in the expelling of students or the firing of faculty members. The most famous example of this theme is the plotline of *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), in which Dean Wormer spends the entire film working to revoke the charter of the Delta Tau Chi fraternity in order to expel the students from the institution. Wormer's portrayal is a quintessential example of administrators trying to expel an undesirable student, group of students, or faculty member (Tucciarone, 2004). Similarly, Dean Pritchard and Mr.

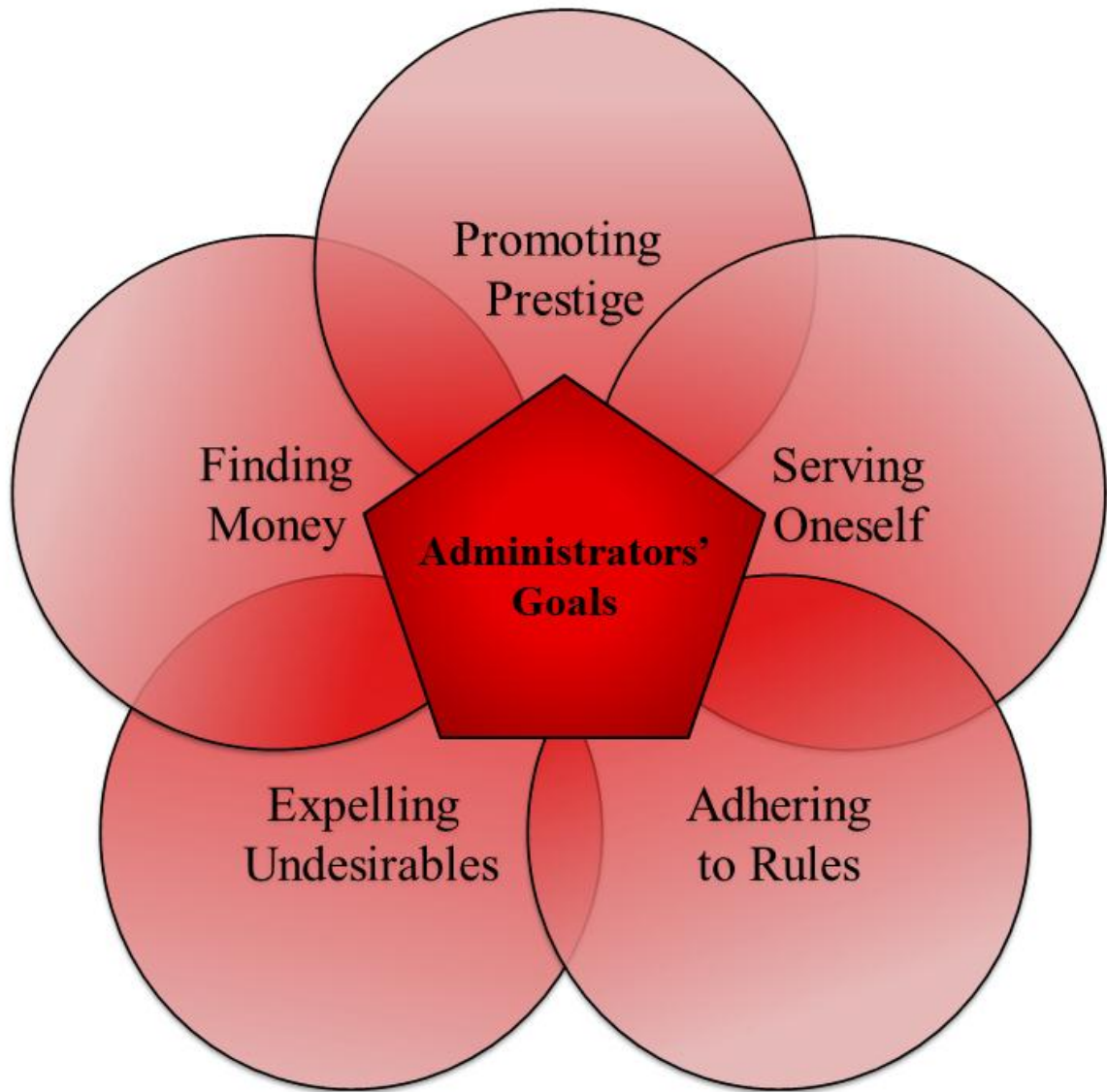


Figure 19. This Venn diagram represents the five major themes of concern for administrators portrayed in the films analyzed.

Springbrook in *Old School* (2003) are concerned with getting a fraternity kicked off the campus. Dean Cain in *How High* (2001) is concerned with eliminating students whom he finds unacceptable and a negative influence at Harvard University. In *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002), Dean Mooney's only visible action is overseeing a hearing to expel a student. In the films analyzed, expulsion is not limited to students. In

Ghostbusters (1984), Dean Yager throws faculty members off-campus because he does not agree with their research methods.

In all cases, the administrators appear to rid students and faculty from the institution as a means of improving educational quality and experiences for others. Even though Dean Pritchard in *Old School* (2003) had a personal relationship with the members of the civilian fraternity that he is trying to kick off campus, the hijinks of the group do present a legitimate concern regarding the safety and well-being of the campus. There are no cases in which the administrator seeks to resolve conflict through open conversation or mediation. The actions are autocratic in nature and represent leaders who are not comfortable in showing any form of perceived weakness by contributing to a dialogue (Van Vugt, Jepson, Hart, & De Cremer, 2004).

These examples of expelling undesirable students or faculty communicate the values of these leaders to an audience. Administrators in films value the institution above the individual. Expelling students or faculty affirms that the administrator does not value the individual student or faculty member but rather puts the interests and needs of the institution first.

Finding Money

Money is very important to the working lives of administrators in the films analyzed. In *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), *Ghostbusters* (1984), *Flubber* (1997), *The Nutty Professor* (1996), and *Social Network* (2010), finances play a critical role in the work of administrators. The need for or use of money ranges significantly from film to film, but it plays a crucial role in most administrators' work.

For some administrators, money is a desperate need. For example, in *Flubber*

(1997), the audience's introduction to Sara Jean Reynolds, President of Medfield College, is a conversation on the telephone with her commenting, "They can't just close down the school. Outside of the Ivy League, name me one private college or university that isn't in financial trouble? Oh, all right. Name another." Ultimately, President Reynolds uses her business acumen to parlay Professor Philip Brainard's invention into a contract that will provide enough funding to save the struggling college. She tells him, "No, Philip, not shoes. No. Look. This. Flight!" Philip asks, "Flight?" She replies, "Yes!"

Similarly, in *The Nutty Professor* (1996), Dean Richmond provides the most dramatic display of an administrator focused solely on money and funding. He repeatedly tells Professor Klump, "We've lost so much money, red is now our new school color. Inner city schools have better computers than we do. Bosnia wants to give us money." In talking about a wealthy alumnus, Richmond says, "I want that money, Klump." After Richmond orchestrates a meeting between a wealthy alumnus and a faculty member, he says, "That's why I found him and brought him to your money, [pause] attention, [pause] brought him to your attention."

Although Dean Richmond's behavior is unscrupulous, his actions lack any personal benefit. Throughout *The Nutty Professor* (1996), Dean Richmond continues to express anger and frustration regarding funding for research at his institution. All the expressed anger of Richmond comes out of a frustration to obtain money for the school with no benefit for himself. Although his treatment of Professor Klump is unprofessional and hostile, his zealous endeavor to obtain funding is only for the benefit of the institution.

As a major theme, money often crosses over into the theme of expelling

undesirables. In *Ghostbusters* (1984), Dean Yager appears in the laboratory of Dr. Venkman, Dr. Stantz, and Dr. Spengler to kick the faculty members off campus. He says to them, “This University will no longer continue any funding of any kind for your group’s activities.” By removing the funding from the faculty members, Yager has essentially killed the faculty members’ financial means of support. Yager pulls the funding and dismisses the faculty members from the campus. Their research and teaching at the university cease at that moment.

In films where money is not the primary focus of the administration, it still plays an important role. Although Dean Wormer in *National Lampoon’s Animal House* (1978) is fixated on ridding the institution of a certain fraternity, he is seen in a discussion with the mayor regarding the need to pay the town for its services associated with the college’s annual homecoming parade. Even in a film that is based on actual events, President Larry Summers of Harvard University in the film *Social Network* (2010) discusses financial concerns with students. Tyler Winklevoss questions President Summer’s ability to determine the value of an idea that has been stolen by a classmate. President Summers replies, “I was the U.S. Treasury Secretary. I’m in some position to make that call.”

Promoting the Prestige of the Institution

The third major theme identified during data analysis is the importance of the name of the institution. Administrators in films are particularly concerned with ensuring that the names of their institutions are not tarnished by the actions of faculty or students. Great lengths are taken to protect the identity and uphold the prestige of institutions.

Harvard University is the quintessential institution regarding reputation and elitism, and the film industry targets it directly. In *How High* (2001), Dean Cain calls

two students an “absolute disgrace” to Harvard University. In *The Great Debaters* (2007), the Dean of Students at Harvard University is concerned with holding up the traditions and excellence of Harvard University while moving toward a progressive stance in their hosting of an inter-racial debate. In *Social Network* (2010), the president of Harvard University, Larry Summers, indicates to students that their concerns are not “worthy of Harvard.” Even in the comedy *Legally Blonde* (2001), an administrator from Harvard Law School argues against the admission of a student from the University of California, Los Angeles, and states, “She also designed [refers to papers] a line of faux fur panties for her sorority’s charity project,” as a rationale to keep her from being admitted.

Harvard is not the only institution concerned with protecting its reputation and name. Even though the institution is not named specifically in the film, Dean Yager in *Ghostbusters* (1984) is concerned with the quality and authenticity of research and eliminates a department of faculty members to protect the quality of research at his institution. President Carr in *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003) is concerned that the content that one faculty member is teaching is too avant-garde or antisocial and reacts to the pressures of alumnae to maintain the prestige of the institution. The overriding concern of President Wagner in *Drumline* (2002), is winning the marching band competition to enhance the reputation of the school. In the first clip of *Accepted* (2006), Dean Van Horne explains to a student the importance of rejecting students and the importance of maintaining exclusivity at the institution. Dean Adams in *Urban Legend* (1998) does not want the recent homicides on his campus to affect the perceptions of the general public and therefore limits publicizing the recent deaths on campus. In *Orange County* (2002),

the Dean of Admissions is concerned with limiting admissions to Stanford University to maintain its fine name.

Esprit de corps is a positive attribute for an educational leader (Smothers et al., 2011). However, the portrayals in these films put the names of the institutions above the needs of constituent groups, thereby placing the concern for elitism and public perception above the needs of the members of the academic community. This prevalent message about an institution's elitism also sends a message about rigor and academic success. Audiences who repeatedly see administrators pushing substandard or misbehaving students out of the institution or limiting access based on lofty admissions criteria may have a misconception regarding the supportive environment of higher education. Films seldom show administrators or even faculty members concerned with helping students to succeed in an academic environment. The overriding message from the films analyzed is that higher education is a place where students will likely fail and be expelled because of their failure.

Adhering to the Rules

The third major theme regarding administrators' concerns is the need to strictly adhere to the rules. As discussed above, administrators in films favor the strict adherence to rules in place of addressing problems directly. Administrators act to follow rules as opposed to supporting the needs of their faculty or students. In situations where administrators do not have a rule to follow, they create one, as in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978). Dean Wormer creates "double-secret probation" to justify his plan to expel the members of the Delta Tau Chi fraternity. Administrators do not address the problems of student or faculty behavior by directly addressing the problems. Instead,

they rely on rules as their primary mode for handling problems.

Much of the rule following culminates in some form of due process. As previously discussed, many films use trials or hearings to manage conflict. The films *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984), *Old School* (2003), and *The House Bunny* (2008), all have elaborate, formal hearings involving administrators, faculty, and students. These example, thus, communicate to American audiences that administrators often put rules above others' needs.

There are times when adhering to rules is beneficial for solving problems. For example, Dean Mooney in *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002) is concerned with running a fair hearing for a student, Van Wilder, and supports his request to remain at the school and finish his education. Dr. Alexander in *Accepted* (2006) is concerned with hearing the evidence and chairing a fair accreditation hearing. However, as noted above, there are many more examples in which administrators use rules to mistreat others.

Serving Oneself

The last major theme is the administrators' concern with themselves. Repeatedly, administrators show that their primary objective is their own well-being or success. For example, Walter Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000) is concerned with publishing his writing and displaying his prized, antique possessions. Dean Lewis in *Accepted* (2006) is concerned with getting paid for pretending to be an administrator, and Dean Durkett in *Orange County* (2002) is concerned with packing for his family's trip as opposed to helping Shaun, a high-school student trying to get into Stanford University.

Intimate, personal relationships are also a manifestation of this selfishness. Marcus Brody in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) is concerned primarily with

his friends' safety. He leaves his administrative duties at the institution and travels overseas to help rescue his friend. Sara Jean Reynolds in *Flubber* (1997) is concerned primarily with her pending marriage to a faculty member, Philip Brainard. Reynolds's secondary concern is to keep her institution from closing due to financial problems. Similarly, Chancellor Sara Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000) is primarily concerned with her romantic affair with a married faculty member. As a nerdy figure, Dean Uhlich in *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984) works to help students to organize a fraternity and be treated respectfully by other students on campus. Often, the thematic concern of expelling students or promoting the prestige of the institution is motivated by an administrator's personal needs. For example, in *National Lampoon's Animal House*, Dean Wormer's passionate pursuit to expel the Delta Chi Tau fraternity is formed out of his personal desire to not contend with the group's hijinks (Tucciarone, 2004).

Chapter Summary

The data analysis for this study followed a theoretical framework that examined repeated messages in American films through the use of a systematic data collection and analysis process. The design of the data analysis included investigation of the films with the highest viewership that contained substantial participation by higher-education administrators. The 21 selected films were analyzed using a research design comprised of Kenneth Burke's (1969) pentadic analysis and parts of George Gerbner's (1998) cultivation analysis.

The data analysis identified 47 domains that recur within the films studied. A substantial number of these domains represent negative leadership behaviors by administrators, including the use of threats, aggression, profanity, doubt of colleagues'

work, and romantic relationships. From these 47 domains, five major themes were constructed that represent the major concerns of administrators as portrayed in the selected films. These themes are as follows: expelling undesirables, finding money, promoting the prestige of the institution, adhering to rules, and serving oneself. In Chapter 5, the data analysis will be discussed through each of the major themes, and recommendations for future research will be offered.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The rationale for the present research study arose from a desire to understand the messages that popular films were communicating to American audiences about higher-education administrators. Repeated use of the phrase “turning to the dark side” from the popular film *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) indicated that individuals’ thinking about higher-education administrators was heavily affected by films. Combined with this cultural effect of films was the consistent strain between administrators and faculty that limits collaboration and trust. Although leadership theory has routinely focused on the relationships between leaders and subordinates, cultural influences on perceptions of administrators have not been a significant part of leadership research. Culture influences both work environments and the individuals who operate within these work environments. This set of conditions inspired a qualitative study to describe the portrayals of higher-education administrators in popular American films. Thus, the following research question was posed: How are higher-education administrators portrayed as characters in popular American films?

Summary of Related Literature and Methodology

The literature review revealed that the relationships between higher-education faculty and administrators are strained; the factors that influence those relationships formed the conceptual framework guiding this study of the dark side phenomenon. The review also included an examination of the reciprocal relationships among film, culture,

and the individual, with each one affecting the other two (see Figure 2). Films have a significant effect on American audiences and American culture. In turn, American culture affects films. Chapter 2 also described the Hollywood curriculum (Dalton, 1999), in which films teach American audiences. The literature review concluded with an examination of research that has described the film portrayals of various members of higher-education constituent groups.

Data collection began with the selection of American films to study and used the following criteria: release within the United States, a relationship to higher education, a high level of viewership, and the substantial portrayal of a higher-education administrator. The data collected for analysis included 174 film clips from 21 films for analysis.

To address the research question for this study required a qualitative research design using strategies from several fields: film studies, communication analysis, educational criticism, and inductive analysis. The theoretical framework for the data collection included Kenneth Burke's (1969) dramatisic analysis and parts of George Gerbner's (1998) cultivation analysis. The theoretical framework for data analysis combined Hatch's (2002) inductive analysis and Spradley's (1979) domain analysis in order to identify themes evident in the data gathered from the selected films. The data analysis process also employed my connoisseurship of theater and higher-education administration.

Discussion of Data Analysis

The process of organizing data within frames and then identifying specific domains (Hatch, 2002; Spradley, 1979) within each of those frames yielded five major

themes portrayed in popular American films: expelling undesirables, finding money, promoting prestige, adhering to rules, and serving oneself. These themes, as pervasive messages, represent negative leadership qualities, even though a few clips involving higher-education administrators portrayed positive leadership qualities.

Hollywood Curriculum

In his web log entry in November of 2011, Dean Dad (2011) referred to the film character “Dr. Evil,” in *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (1997); from his perspective, this character represented the way that many faculty members perceive administrators. Dean Dad’s allusion to an evil film character is yet another example of the immense influence of popular media. The portrayals of administrators in film serve as a powerful curriculum, through which individual audience members and the culture as a whole will learn (Dalton, 1999). Audience members are affected by the films they view, and, subsequently, the messages presented about administrators influence the way members of constituent groups in higher education view administrators (Dalton, 1999; Ferro, 1988; Quart & Auster, 2002).

Based on the data analysis, the portrayals of administrators in popular American films will do little to promote a cooperative and healthy work environment for students, faculty, and administrators. The abundant examples of poor leadership qualities portrayed in American films inevitably influence relationships between administrators and constituent groups. Indeed, future students, faculty, and administrators who see such films over time may develop expectations that leadership behaviors in higher education are consistently negative.

The identification of these negative leadership portrayals suggests a need to

improve the quality of higher-education leadership based on these observations. The means to address the negative portrayals is first to become aware of the behaviors portrayed in films and then to combat those negative portrayals by way of administrators demonstrating positive leadership qualities.

The Lessons from Reel Administrators

Popular media are a pervasive part of American culture that exist to entertain. Encouraging film-makers to consider portraying the positive leadership qualities of higher-education administrators more often might likely produce no constructive results. There may be no practical way to alter these messages. However, there is an opportunity to balance the messages of films by thoughtful action on the part of administrators.

Each of the major themes of the film portrayals represents a trap for actual administrators to avoid. Existing and future administrators should strive to avoid the negative behaviors reflected in each of the major themes and should instead model positive leadership qualities that directly contradict the negative portrayals in popular American films. The following section provides suggestions for combating each of the five negative leadership themes. For clarity in the discussion, the administrator portrayals in films are referred to as *reel administrators*, with the term *reel* borrowed from the work of previous researchers studying film portrayals (Czech, 2004; Graham et al., 2004; Helms, 2006; Nederhouser, 2000; Reynolds, 2007; Tucciarone, 2007; Wolfrom, 2010). Real-life administrators are referred to as *actual administrators*.

Expelling Undesirables

Reel administrators face the problems of unruly students and problematic faculty by ejecting them from the institution. Reel administrators make the mistake of

immediately working to remove the undesirable element. Actual administrators should avoid this trap and consider a more inclusive approach to managing problems.

Embracing the concepts of coaching and mentoring helps constituent group members see actual administrators as being concerned for others' individual success as much as they are concerned for the institution (McCaffery, 2004). The empowerment that results from such efforts for all people involved can also yield benefits for the organization (Collins, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; Levi, 2001; McCaffery, 2004; Senge, 1990).

Finding Money

In uncertain economic times, both reel administrators and actual administrators raise funds to continue the operations of the institution. However, reel administrators demonstrate a focus solely on the need for money, and this need outweighs all other concerns or goals of the institution. Actual administrators should avoid the trap of focusing entirely on budgets and take a more even-handed approach to support the work of the institution in all its forms. Administrators need to balance the many and varied priorities of their work (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Ensuring that the actual administrator takes time to support the work of faculty and students and the other goals of the organization is critical to successful leadership.

Actual administrators should also think carefully about the way they approach the topic of funding when working with faculty. Although fund-raising is important for all members of an organization to accept, a narrow-minded focus on fund-raising, to the exclusion of other needs at the institution, is misguided and may generate mistrust among faculty who focus on teaching and scholarship (Rath & Conchie, 2008). In *The Nutty Professor* (1996), Dean Richmond is a despicable reel administrator because he demeans

himself, subordinates, and colleagues by groveling for money. Unfortunately, Richmond's goal is noble, insofar as he never expresses a personal interest or benefit from the process of seeking financial support for the institution. However, his singular aim to raise funds diminishes his capacity for effective collaboration with colleagues and subordinates.

Actual administrators should find ways to include others in efforts to support the institution financially. Disclosing financial information and providing access for constituent groups to see the way funds are raised and spent will bolster both trust in leaders and confidence in the process. Developing a culture of "reciprocity" (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 68), whereby all constituent groups recognize the value and responsibilities associated with funding maximizes the overall benefit by encouraging others to participate in the financial process (Rath & Conchie, 2008).

In addition, actual administrators need to acknowledge the importance of both research and teaching in higher education. Reel administrators favor research work because it is lucrative. This focus on research is often to the detriment of teaching. Such a perspective reflects a limited view of the mission of higher education. Actual administrators need to place high regard on quality instruction (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) while supporting research. Encouraging faculty and staff to perform well in all areas of their work is necessary for the long-term financial benefit of the institution (McCaffery, 2004).

Promoting the Prestige of the Institution

Another negative leadership behavior portrayed in films is the way reel administrators zealously promote the prestige of their institutions. Promoting the prestige

of the institution should not be at a cost to students or faculty members. Actual leaders should avoid the trap of elitism while taking pride in their institutions. *Esprit de corps* is an important component of effective leadership (Smothers et al., 2011), but moderation in promoting the institution is necessary.

Working to promote the prestige of the institution at any cost may lead to unethical behaviors. As Marshall (2011) pointed out, the leadership at Penn State, so zealously protective of the reputation of the football program and the institution's name, lost their ethical perspective and ability to make appropriate choices in the face of evil practices. With so few examples of ethical behavior among real administrators, it is critical that actual administrators carefully consider each leadership challenge with the highest ethical regard.

When administrators seek to discuss the pride they have in their departments or institutions, they should use language that is inclusive of all members (McCaffery, 2004). Four films portray Harvard University as the quintessential elitist institution with administrators who consistently flaunt its name and prestige. The four films fail to identify the fact that Harvard is a great institution because of its world-class faculty and students who attend. For actual administrators, framing the prestige of the institution in an inclusive manner communicates a pride not only in the organization but in the individuals who work and learn there. Kouzes and Posner (2003) affirmed the need to build a "spirit of community" (p. 89) in higher-education leadership through acknowledging and celebrating accomplishments. Building this sense of community helps garner respect, trust, and commitment to the institution and the members within the organization (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Furthermore, such expressions of pride should not

occur as a means to denigrate the efforts of other higher-education institutions.

Adhering to the Rules

The third negative leadership quality portrayed in films is the rigid adherence to the rules. Enforcement of policies and rules is a staple of the work of an educational leader (Gmelch & Schuh, 2004; McCaffery, 2004); however, films have taken the practice to a dramatic level. Reel administrators do not address the causes of problems on campus; instead they rigidly adhere to rules, often without considering the impact on students and faculty. Actual administrators should avoid the trap of adhering to rules at all costs and instead address the root causes of problems. Actual administrators should use rules thoughtfully to solve conflicts and to bring about change.

Rigid adherence to rules works against the creation of a collaborative environment in academia (Sternberg, 2011). Compassion is a highly regarded leadership trait that aids in building trust and respect among colleagues and subordinates (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Greenstreet, 2010; McCaffery, 2004; Rath & Conchie, 2008; Smothers et al., 2011). Having compassion also means encouraging others to make decisions and supporting those decisions. Kouzes and Posner (2003) referred to encouraging others as way of “generating power all around” (p. 72). Rules are used to facilitate the work of all within the organization; however, they should not serve to restrain actual administrators from solving complex problems. A good leader inspires other to act (Collins, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; McCaffery, 2004). If Dean Wormer in *National Lampoon’s Animal House* (1978) had worked with the members of the Delta Tau Chi fraternity to divert their energies from parties and pranks in order to focus on their studies and positive recreational activities, the outcome of their conflict might have been more

positive. Although not comedic, the result may have been students who begin to lose interest in anti-social pranks and in damaging the college's property.

Serving Oneself

The fourth negative leadership portrayal in films is the self-serving conduct of reel administrators. Reel administrators are often shown working for their own self-interest and not for the benefit of their institutions or other constituent groups, often locked in self-serving pursuits. Actual administrators should combat the trap of self-benefit by expressing both their altruistic motivations and concern for others (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Podsakoff et al., 1996).

Actual administrators should limit attention on themselves. Sternberg (2011) warned of the "Here I am!" mentality of administrators. To combat this mentality, administrators, who come from faculty lines and have known the professional advantage of increasing the visibility of their research accomplishments and publications, should be cautious about this behavior when they move into administrative roles. Administrators promoting themselves and their work can diminish their ability to collaborate effectively. Therefore, actual administrators should think beyond their self-interest and encourage collaboration (Sternberg, 2011; Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002). Actual administrators need to reach out to the constituent groups to help give voice to all members of the institution (Covey, 2004; see also Greenstreet, 2010; McCaffery, 2004; Smothers et al., 2011; Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002).

The self-serving, reel administrator also takes her or his work too seriously. As a result, reel administrators are often the target of jokes. Actual administrators should find appropriate opportunities to be lighthearted. Levity is not only entertaining; it is also an

effective leadership quality (Greenstreet, 2010; Smothers et al., 2011; Stogdill, 1948) that permits actual administrators to not take themselves so seriously. An occasional joke can lighten the tension and help put stressful situations into perspective. Levity is also highly regarded by others. Marcus Brody, the administrator in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), is humorously portrayed as foolish and clumsy, but his colleagues and friends hold him in high regard and are intensely concerned with his safety. The human foibles that Brody conveys endear him to both his contemporaries and the audience. Leaders might benefit from taking time to acknowledge their foibles and approach their work with honesty and a little humor (Greenstreet, 2010; Stogdill, 1948).

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of the present research study suggest several research questions for further work. American films offer data worthy of study (Dalton, 1999; Dittus, 2007; Schwartz, 1963; Somers et al., 2006; Tucciarone, 2007). During the process of reviewing the literature, selecting films for this investigation, collecting data, and analyzing data, topics for further investigation became apparent.

Effect of Portrayals on Audience Members

This study was exploratory and descriptive in nature. From an understanding of the way administrators are portrayed in films, further research might examine the effect the portrayals have on individuals who view them. Understanding the way messages shape faculty members' and students' attitudes, values, and beliefs toward administrators could be immensely beneficial. Small-group discussion and interviews might uncover the predispositions or biases audience members have toward administrators after viewing films.

Evolution of Film Titles

The process of selecting films for analysis in this study generated a list of film titles related to higher education. An examination of these film titles suggests there has been a change in the content and values presented in college films over time. For example, the film titles of the late 1930s and early 1940s emphasize sports and women. Early titles, such as *Blondie* (1938), *Knute Rockne—All American* (1940), and *Touchdown* (1931), reflect a more wholesome idea of college life where football and meeting a future spouse were the goals of the college experience, along with earning a degree. As the years progress, the connotations of the film titles shift toward less wholesome content, with titles like *Sex Kittens Go to College* (1960), *Monster on Campus* (1958), and *Hell Night* (1981). A content analysis of film titles might contribute to an understanding of the way American culture has changed its views regarding the roles and values of higher education over time. Just as the films in this study were influenced by the historical contexts during which they were made, the film titles could be used as indicators of historical and social meanings, values, and mores regarding experiences in higher education.

Gender of Administrators

Although the gender of administrators portrayed in films was discussed briefly in Chapter 4, more exploration of this characteristic of administrators could be informative. That two out of three of the female administrators portrayed in the selected films were involved in relationships with male faculty members is not an accidental plotline. In their roles, these female administrators focused on romantic relationships rather than on the work of their offices. Additional research that specifically looks at film portrayals of

women in leadership roles might provide insight into the way audiences view women in educational leadership. Exploring portrayals beyond higher education may also be a way of analyzing film messages conveyed about female leadership.

Post-Party Film Clips

The data collection stage of the present study repeatedly exposed clips of the college party and its aftermath. *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), *Accepted* (2006), and *Old School* (2003) depict the disarray following a large social event. A study of these specific aftermath clips might provide valuable insight into the way students are perceived to socialize, drink, do drugs, and *party* in college. The depictions in these film clips might also provide insight into the social acceptability of risky behaviors such as casual sex, binge drinking, and illegal drug use.

Parental Involvement

Parents of students appear as a relatively new part of films about the college experience. In recent films, such as *Accepted* (2006), *Wonder Boys* (2000), and *Urban Legend* (1998), reel administrators interact with the parents of college students. For example, in *Accepted* (2006), the parents of Bartleby Gaines insist on meeting and talking to Dean Lewis. They question the dean about the education that for which they are paying. The dean replies:

Look, we throw a lot of fancy words in front of these kids in order to attract them to going to school in the belief that they're going to have a better life, and we all know that all we're doing is breeding [a] whole new generation of buyers and sellers, buyers and sellers, pimps and whores, pimps and whores, and indoctrinating them into a life-long hell of debt and indecision.

The content of this monologue is unique because it is a film reference to the concern parents have over the cost and benefit of a college education. The film acknowledges

that the role of parents is integral in the higher-education process. This clip is in stark contrast to the content of *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), where the parents of the students are never mentioned. The fraternity member and student John "Bluto" Blutarsky, played by John Belushi (Tucciarone, 2007), engages in heavy drinking and illegal behavior and fails all of his classes. Blutarsky's parents are never mentioned during the film, nor are the parents of Blutarsky's fellow fraternity members. Parents in more recent films are portrayed as much more involved in their children's college experience; this portrayal may or may not be an accurate reflection of the current trend in higher education. Understanding the cultural expectations of parents for the college experience, as influenced by American films, might help to inform decisions regarding student success and retention in higher education and better prepare both administrators and faculty members to support the educational outcomes desired for contemporary college students.

Importance of Alumni

Data analysis in this study described the importance of alumni as a constituent group in higher education. In the films *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), *Drumline* (2002), *How High* (2010), and *The Nutty Professor* (1996), alumni are a prominent constituent group who yield a great deal of power. Researchers of films should consider the level of power held by the graduates of an institution. In *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), alumnae control everything down to the curriculum and pedagogical choices of the faculty. Further research regarding film portrayals of alumni influence over the day-to-day operations of institutions might help inform administrators about this important group in higher education.

Names of Higher-Education Institutions

Another area for investigation relates to the names used for institutions of higher learning. A casual observation during this research was that the names for institutions of higher learning seemed to shift over time. Earlier films used the term *college* for institutions of higher learning. In *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), the institution is Faber College, and *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984) takes place at Adams College. However, recent films viewed do not use the term *college*. For example, *Drumline* (2002) takes place at a fictional institution called Atlanta A & T, and the schools in *Accepted* (2006) are called Harmon Institute of Technology and South Harmon Institute of Technology. The change in terminology may reflect a perceptual shift because the term *college* may no longer carry the weight of rigorous educational experiences. In addition, the use of the term *J. C.* to mean *junior college* in the period film *American Graffiti* (1973) might also be an example of the negative connotations associated with the term *college*.

Similarly, Hollywood takes every opportunity to place the name of the institution on everything that moves within a film—the students, the walls, and the halls. For example, in *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984), the Greek council sits at an “A” shaped desk to represent Adams College. Throughout the film, a giant “A” is displayed on costumes, décor, and buildings. Further investigation on the use of the institutions’ names in films might give insight into the way institutional names are perceived.

Conclusions

The present study explored educational leadership through the lens of popular media. Thus, the results of this study provide a unique perspective for examining

educational leadership and can inform the work of individuals working in or studying higher-education leadership because they provide detailed, graphic examples of both negative and positive leadership behaviors. Several examples of negative leadership behaviors portrayed in American films were discussed, and suggestions were provided to avoid these negative leadership traps. In addition, suggestions were given to counteract the negative messages of film portrayals with positive leadership behaviors. The foundation of effective leadership is an understanding of all aspects of the process and phenomena. The themes identified in this study add clarity to both the individuals who lead and the environments in which they work. Film provides new ways to look at educational leadership and, thus, can be instructive for educational leaders.

Adding to the significance of this research study is the benefit it offers in demonstrating and informing audiences about the working relationships between higher-education administrators and faculty, students, and alumni. When educational leaders view the portrayals in these films, they can observe unproductive working conditions that lead to a lack of trust and communication and learn from them (Czech, 2004; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Because working relationships in higher education are often strained (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Greenstreet, 2010; Palm, 2006; Willis, 2010), any opportunity to identify causes and seek understanding is of benefit. Strained relationships limit productivity, collaboration, and longevity for people in administrative posts (Gmelch, 2010; McCaffery, 2004). Further, any employment turnover results in unstable leadership that can affect the quality of an academic program (Collins, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

This research study provided characters with reel faces who can inform the work

of educational leaders. The messages from these films may help leaders create positive working environment where colleagues can empathize, motivate, and trust one another, essential if leaders in higher education are to lead their organizations (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; McCaffery, 2004; Wisniewski et al., 2007). Veteran, current, and future administrators can see and hear reel administrators demonstrating negative and positive leadership behavior (Betts et al., 2009; Land, 2003). The studied films provide explicit examples of the ways administrators should and should not lead (Keroes, 1999; Scull & Peltier, 2007).

The Power of Films

The reach and power of films continue to grow. In October 2011, 42.6 billion videos were viewed online in one month by United States audiences, an all-time high (Perez, 2011). That equates to 184 million Americans watching an average of 21.1 hours of video online in one month. More and more, people are turning to the Internet and videos to see and understand their world. Even though most of the online videos were not American films, the pervasiveness of films continues to grow as technology provides greater access to content (Perez, 2000). Films are powerful because we, as humans, use these stories to convey ideas and information (Coulter & Smith, 2009; Dalton, 1999). Films are another highly visible set of stories by which we learn (Dalton, 1999; Starratt, 1993) and apply as much to organizations as they do to individuals (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Educational leaders need to accept that popular media are rich sources of content to explore. These forms of entertainment reflect popular culture and convey powerful, repeated messages that will affect the way members of higher-education constituent

groups think about and relate to one another. Thus, popular films can serve as a powerful curriculum because they provide educational examples for emerging educational leaders to study. Web sites like moviesforbusiness.com (The Oxalis Group, 2011) sell “reel business lessons” that use popular films as the curriculum for leadership development. The significance of films as a curriculum for educational leaders is also clear. This research study offered rich and descriptive examples and non-examples of educational practices that educational leaders can study. These leadership messages may also serve leaders outside of academia. Leaders in a variety of sectors may benefit from learning and avoiding the leadership traps uncovered by this research.

The Need for Media Literacy

Another way to combat the influence of negative portrayals of administrators is to help the American audiences think critically about the messages they receive in films. Films not only inform educational leaders about leadership, but they also inform all others on a variety of subjects. American audiences need the tools to understand and think critically about the pervasive messages they receive from all forms of media, including film (Czech, 2004; Dalton, 1999; Keroes, 2005). As the influence of media has been well documented, it is crucial that educators seek out opportunities to inform the general American audiences and equip them with the tools necessary to think critically about the messages that bombard them on a minute-by-minute basis. With the growing outlet of information coming from digital arenas (Smith, 2009), the need for this literacy is even greater (Kahne, Lee, & Feezell, 2012).

The Center for Media Literacy (n.d.) is one of many media literacy resources that may help in efforts to encourage audiences to challenge the pervasive messages that they

view. Without providing the critical-thinking skills necessary to inform the general public, there is little hope that audience members can differentiate between the world portrayed by media and the reality within which they operate.

The Dark Side is Dark

The impetus for this research study grew out of one film line used by numerous colleagues and acquaintances when describing the transition of a higher-education faculty member moving to an administrative post. The phrase “turning to the dark side” is symbolic of the power and influence of film in characterizing the working relationships within higher education. This “great divide” between faculty and administration (Land, 2003, p. 14) is an important phenomenon in higher education as it undermines collaboration and creativity (Gmelch, 2010; Greenstreet, 2010; McCaffery, 2004).

Data analysis within the present study led to the conclusion that the portrayals of administrators in American films are negative and, thus, may create negative views of administrators in the minds of those who view the films. When American audiences see Dean Wormer in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978) smile and kiss his secretary at the news that a group of students has failed out of school, when they see Dean Pritchard in *Old School* (2003) bribe and then double-cross students, and when they see Dean Richmond in *The Nutty Professor* (1996) fire a faculty member and tell him, “I am going to kill you professionally,” it is unlikely the American audience will hold administrators in high regard. The view of administrators as being from the dark side is motivated in part by the films’ portrayals of administrators. The negative leadership qualities repeatedly exhibited by administrators in films have a cumulative effect on the American audience (Gerbner, 1998)

This divide between desirable leadership behaviors and undesirable leadership behaviors is exemplified in a clip from *Accepted* (2006), when Dean Van Horne praises a student for beginning to think without regard to ethics. Van Horne tells the student, “That’s the kind of thinking that will get you into law school.” Van Horne’s comment to the student provides a higher-education version parallel to Darth Vader’s pleas for his son to “join the dark side” in *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980).

Leaders Must Rise Above the Darkness

Even though negative portrayals of higher-education administrators continue to permeate American culture, the need for good leadership in higher education continues to grow and is more important than ever (Greenstreet, 2010; Kamenetz, 2010; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; McCaffery, 2004). Leaders must be careful to avoid the five negative leadership behaviors developed as themes from data analysis within the present study. These themes represent negative behaviors or traps potentially snaring educational leaders. The films studied here represent a rich source for witnessing and better understanding negative leadership in higher education.

The ever-changing landscape of education and technology requires the best and brightest to come forward and serve administrative posts. Future leaders are needed who will work collaboratively and lead organizations to improve the quality of and access to higher education in the United States (Astin & Astin, 2000; Zemsky, 2009). High-quality academic leadership is the greatest advantage of higher education to face continuous changes (Koen & Bitzer, 2010). The need for quality, ethical leadership is more important than ever (Astin & Astin, 2000; Greenstreet, 2010; Marshall, 2011).

Unfortunately, American films portray higher-education administration as an

undesirable career choice. As the protagonist in *Accepted* (2006), student Bartleby Gaines addresses the accreditation board and suggests that few administrators start their career with the goal of becoming higher-education administrators:

What about you guys? Did you always want to be school administrators? Dr. Alexander was that your dream? Maybe, no. Maybe you wanted to be a poet. Maybe you wanted to be a magician or an artist. Maybe you just wanted to travel the world.

This sentiment was echoed by Lees (2006), who asked why any “sane person” (p. 333), knowing all of the struggles of working in administration, might choose to become an educational leader.

Educational leaders are not the polar opposite of artists, for they, too, are complex individuals with much to offer to those whom they serve. However, films do not portray actual administrators as multi-dimensional leaders who bring a variety of talents to their work. Perhaps the day will come when films will not judge administrators as the polar opposites of poets, magicians, and artists. The vast majority of good administrators are truly poets, magicians, and artists. With limited resources and an ever-shifting work environment, educational leaders do poetic, magical, and artistic acts each and every day in an effort to further the missions of their institutions (Gmelch, 2010; Greenstreet, 2010; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; McCaffery, 2004). Leaders should not lose who they are as individuals with many facets and interests.

The portrayals in films may also be preventing faculty members from even considering a career change to administration. Resneck-Pierce (2011) noted that the internal path from faculty member to chief academic officer and president has been slowly shrinking over the last few years. Administrative posts are less and less attractive to seasoned faculty members (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). As noted in Chapter 4,

administrators in films are most often shown at the apex or end of their careers. They appear as seasoned professionals who understand their roles and are comfortable in their positions. These negative portrayals may also be a factor in keeping faculty from becoming administrators, as faculty may not view themselves in these roles. However, new administrators are needed to face higher education's increasing challenges (Gmelch, 2010; Kamenetz, 2010; Zemsky, 2009). Despite the negative portrayals, these potential administrators need to understand that they have an opportunity to enter into and succeed in higher-education leadership.

The selected films do not portray in administrators the qualities of leadership necessary to lead effectively. Transformational and visionary leadership are never portrayed. The reactionary portrayal of the administrators in these films displays the opposite of the way effective leadership should operate in reality. The films do not depict the characteristics of transformational leaders who help individuals within the organization to self-actualize. The four qualities of a transformational leader include the following: charismatic, innovative, empathetic, and compassionate (Astin & Astin, 2000; Burns, 2003; Podsakoff et al., 1996; Smothers et al., 2011). Most notably, ethical behavior in leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Beauchamp & Bowie, 2004) is also absent from almost the entire spectrum of leadership portrayals.

The coming years may be a tumultuous time for higher education during which leaders must navigate the educational landscape and move institutions of higher learning to adapt to many challenges (Astin & Astin, 2000; Kamenetz, 2010; Zemsky, 2009). These challenges include the skyrocketing cost of tuition, the technological advances disrupting traditional instructional delivery methods, and the shifting demographics of

college students (Kamenetz, 2010).

The present study provided an opportunity to understand administrative portrayals in film. This understanding may encourage the development of positive, collaborative leadership in higher education in the effort to mitigate the negative influences from these portrayals in American films. The cultural use of the phrase “turning to the dark side” is strongly linked to the portrayals studied in this research. Still, there remains an immense opportunity for leaders in higher education to learn from observing reel administrators, using sound judgment, and leading with ethics and strength. We only need to remember when Luke Skywalker is asked to turn to the dark side, his steadfast reply is, “I’ll never turn to the dark side.” This message is one of ethical leadership that every administrator can adopt.

Chapter Summary

This chapter began with a review of the rationale for the study. Working relationships among higher-education administrators and members of constituent groups are strained because of strong organizational and cultural elements. The literature review for this dissertation yielded a theoretical framework known as the dark side phenomenon, which described the intersection of working dynamics, role and pay differentials, and the influence of culture and media. The literature supporting the pervasiveness of film and its effect on the individual and American culture was also reviewed. The research question for the present study was thus framed as follows: How are higher-education administrators portrayed as characters in popular American films?

The research design borrowed from a variety of fields, including visual anthropology, film studies, communication, and education and curriculum theory to craft

an appropriate framework for data collection and analysis. The description of the theoretical framework for data collection and analysis referred to the work of Burke (1969) and Gerbner (1998) as influential, as well as Hatch's (2002) inductive analysis and Spradley's (1979) domain analysis. The analysis of data generated five themes representing negative leadership behaviors: expelling undesirables, finding money, promoting prestige, adhering to rules, and serving oneself.

Actual administrators can avoid the negative leadership behaviors identified by responding to the portrayals of these films with thoughtful and collaborative leadership. Administrators who coach, mentor, collaborate, give credit to others, show compassion, and who involve others in the fund-raising process will demonstrate positive leadership qualities that negate the negative portrayals of films. Recommendations for further study include how film portrayal affects audience members, how higher-education film titles have evolved, how accurately the gender of administrators is portrayed in comparison to reality, how the aftermath of college parties is portrayed, how parental involvement of college students is portrayed, how involvement by alumni is portrayed, and how an institution's name appears in films. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the flexibility of film, the power of film, the need for media literacy for all of those who consume film messages, the acknowledgment that the dark side phenomenon is indeed based on numerous negative portrayals of higher-education administrators in film, and the need for educational leaders to rise above the darkness presented in films.

The results from the present study provide an opportunity for actual and future higher-education administrators to learn from the portrayals of the American films selected. By avoiding the traps of the five themes representing negative leadership

behaviors and employing effective, positive leadership qualities, actual higher-education administrators can do much to improve the quality of their working relationships and, hence, the quality of higher education. Reel administrators like Dean Wormer in *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), Dean Pritchard in *Old School* (2003), and Chancellor Gaskell in *Wonder Boys* (2000), not only provide value as entertainment but also can teach important lessons for current and future leaders in higher education.

APPENDIX A: FILMOGRAPHIES USED FOR FILM SELECTION

- Allmovie.com – keyword search of “college,” yielding a filmography
- Boxofficemojo.com - comedy college category, 1978 - present
- Byers (2005) filmography about higher education
- Hinton (1991) filmography about higher education
- The Internet Movie Database (IMDB) - keyword search “college” and “dean,” yielding a filmography
- The Internet Movie Database (IMDB) - keyword search “college” and “president,” yielding a filmography
- The Internet Movie Database (IMDB) - most popular “campus” movies filmography
- The Internet Movie Database (IMDB) –keywords search “campus” and “college,” yielding a filmography
- The Internet Movie Database (IMDB) – keyword search “college” and “professor,” yielding a filmography
- Oliker (1993) filmography about higher education
- Reynolds (2007) filmography about higher education
- Somers, et al. (2006) filmography about higher education
- Umphlett (1984) filmography about higher education
- Videhound “campus capers” filmography
- Videhound “fraternities and sororities” filmography

APPENDIX B: TOP HIGHER EDUCATION RELATED AMERICAN FILMS
RANKED BY HIGHEST NUMBER OF IMDB RATINGS

Rank	Film	IMDB Ratings as of 10/9/11	Year of Release
1	<i>Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade</i>	206,208	1989
2	<i>Good Will Hunting</i>	191,853	1997
3	<i>A Beautiful Mind</i>	167,883	2001
4	<i>Social Network</i>	159,976	2010
5	<i>Ghostbusters</i>	102,398	1984
6	<i>High Fidelity</i>	78,430	2000
7	<i>Old School</i>	74,557	2003
8	<i>Scream 2</i>	59,787	1997
9	<i>Road Trip</i>	55,711	2000
10	<i>Legally Blonde</i>	52,936	2001
11	<i>What Lies Beneath</i>	52,051	2000
12	<i>National Lampoon's Animal House</i>	46,941	1978
13	<i>Rope</i>	39,536	1948
14	<i>The Nutty Professor (1996)</i>	38,725	1996
15	<i>National Lampoon's Van Wilder</i>	37,781	2002
16	<i>Accepted</i>	35,266	2006
17	<i>American Graffiti</i>	34,704	1973
18	<i>Wonder Boys</i>	34,628	2000
19	<i>Lolita</i>	31,609	1962
20	<i>The Rules of Attraction</i>	29,825	2002
21	<i>Mona Lisa Smile</i>	27,634	2003
22	<i>Orange County</i>	26,246	2002
23	<i>The House Bunny</i>	24,995	2008
24	<i>Flubber</i>	23,542	1997
25	<i>Urban Legend</i>	22,757	1998
26	<i>The Visitor</i>	21,598	2007

27	<i>Proof</i>	21,113	2005
28	<i>American Pie Presents: The Naked Mile</i>	20,036	2006
29	<i>Rudy</i>	19,569	1993
30	<i>Drumline</i>	19,269	2002
31	<i>How High</i>	18,772	2001
32	<i>Revenge of the Nerds</i>	18,755	1984
33	<i>American Pie Presents: Beta House</i>	18,113	2007
34	<i>We Are Marshall</i>	17,575	2006
35	<i>The Great Debaters</i>	17,458	2007
36	<i>The Skulls</i>	16,849	2000
37	<i>Stomp the Yard</i>	14,862	2007
38	<i>Pulse</i>	14,052	2006
39	<i>Loser</i>	13,512	2000
40	<i>St. Elmo's Fire</i>	13,185	1985
41	<i>Love Story</i>	10,887	1970
42	<i>Back to School</i>	10,283	1986
43	<i>Elegy</i>	10,251	2008
44	<i>Sydney White</i>	9,971	2007
45	<i>National Lampoon's Van Wilder 2: The Rise of Taj</i>	9,607	2006
46	<i>Malice</i>	9,331	1993
47	<i>Black Christmas</i>	8,787	1975
48	<i>Higher Learning</i>	8,678	1995
49	<i>The Sure Thing</i>	8,329	1985
50	<i>Slackers</i>	8,189	2002
51	<i>Boys and Girls</i>	7,953	2000
52	<i>Gossip</i>	7,809	2000
53	<i>Sorority Boys</i>	7,708	2002
54	<i>Dead Man on Campus</i>	7,323	1998
55	<i>College Road Trip</i>	7,169	2008

56	<i>PCU</i>	7,149	1994
57	<i>Threesome</i>	7,129	1994
58	<i>College (2008)</i>	6,863	2008
59	<i>With Honors</i>	6,475	1994
60	<i>Outside Providence</i>	5,732	1999
61	<i>Horse Feathers</i>	5,641	1932
62	<i>Educating Rita</i>	5,626	1983
63	<i>Senseless</i>	5,559	1998
64	<i>Abandon</i>	5,507	2002
65	<i>Revenge of the Nerds 2: Nerds in Paradise</i>	5,385	1987
66	<i>Teen Wolf Too</i>	5,313	1987
67	<i>Pumpkin</i>	5,288	2002
68	<i>Night of the Creeps</i>	5,159	1986
69	<i>The Nutty Professor (1963)</i>	4,942	1963
70	<i>D.O.A.</i>	4,762	1988
71	<i>Carnal Knowledge</i>	4,721	1971
72	<i>The Program</i>	3,990	1993
73	<i>Kicking and Screaming</i>	3,962	1995
74	<i>Necessary Roughness</i>	3,771	1991
75	<i>Soul Man</i>	3,504	1986
76	<i>Bring it On Again</i>	3,456	2004
77	<i>Van Wilder: Freshman Year</i>	3,290	2008
78	<i>The Paper Chase</i>	3,171	1973
79	<i>Krippendorf's Tribe</i>	3,168	1998
80	<i>Music Within</i>	3,155	2007
81	<i>The Absent-Minded Professor</i>	3,136	1961
82	<i>Fright Night Part 2</i>	2,937	1988
83	<i>School Daze</i>	2,728	1988
84	<i>Decoys</i>	2,600	2004

85	<i>Johnny Be Good</i>	2,519	1988
86	<i>New Best Friend</i>	2,096	2002
87	<i>Real Genius</i>	2,013	1985
88	<i>Pieces</i>	1,965	1982
89	<i>Bickford Shmeckler's Cool Ideas</i>	1,842	2006
90	<i>The Freshman</i>	1,828	1925
91	<i>Hell Night</i>	1,786	1981
92	<i>Witchboard</i>	1,782	1986
93	<i>National Lampoon's Adam & Eve</i>	1,771	2005
94	<i>Glory Daze</i>	1,743	1995
95	<i>Midnight Madness</i>	1,713	1980
96	<i>Kaboom</i>	1,693	2010
97	<i>House Party 2</i>	1,671	1991
98	<i>College (1927)</i>	1,662	1927
99	<i>The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes</i>	1,561	1969
100	<i>Mazes and Monsters</i>	1,540	1982

APPENDIX C: VIEWED FILMS RANKED BY HIGHEST NUMBER OF IMDB
RATINGS

Film	Year of Release	IMDB as of 10/9/11	Genre	Significant Administrator?	Rank of Significant Administrator Film	Data Collected?	# of Clips per Film
<i>Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade</i>	1989	206,208	action	yes	1	yes	21
<i>A Beautiful Mind</i>	2001	167,883	drama	yes	2	yes	4
<i>Social Network</i>	2010	159,976	drama	yes	2b	yes	1
<i>Ghostbusters</i>	1984	102,398	comedy	yes	3	yes	1
<i>Old School</i>	2003	74,557	comedy	yes	4	yes	15
<i>Legally Blonde</i>	2001	52,936	comedy	yes	5	yes	1
<i>National Lampoon's Animal House</i>	1978	46,941	comedy	yes	6	yes	13
<i>The Nutty Professor (1996)</i>	1996	38,725	comedy	yes	7	yes	12
<i>National Lampoon's Van Wilder</i>	2002	37,781	comedy	yes	8	yes	2
<i>Accepted</i>	2006	35,266	comedy	yes	10	yes	16
<i>Wonder Boys</i>	2000	34,628	drama	yes	9	yes	14

<i>Mona Lisa Smile</i>	2003	27,634	drama	yes	12	yes	7
<i>Orange County</i>	2002	26,246	comedy	yes	11	yes	6
<i>The House Bunny</i>	2008	24,995	comedy	yes	13	yes	2
<i>Flubber</i>	1997	23,542	Family	yes	14	yes	19
<i>Urban Legend</i>	1998	22,757	Horror	yes	15	yes	4
<i>The Visitor</i>	2007	21,598	drama	yes	16	yes	4
<i>Drumline</i>	2002	19,269	drama	yes	17	yes	4
<i>How High</i>	2001	18,772	comedy	yes	20	yes	15
<i>Revenge of the Nerds</i>	1984	18,755	comedy	yes	18	yes	12
<i>The Great Debaters</i>	2007	17,458	drama	yes	19	yes	1
<i>Good Will Hunting</i>	1997	191,853	###	no	###	###	###
<i>High Fidelity</i>	2000	78,430	###	no	###	###	###
<i>Scream 2</i>	1997	59,787	###	no	###	###	###
<i>Road Trip</i>	2000	55,711	###	no	###	###	###
<i>What Lies Beneath</i>	2000	52,051	###	no	###	###	###

<i>Rope</i>	1948	39,536	###	no	###	###	###
<i>American Graffiti</i>	1973	34,704	###	no	###	###	###
<i>Lolita</i>	1962	31,609	###	no	###	###	###
<i>The Rules of Attraction</i>	2002	29,825	###	no	###	###	###
<i>Proof</i>	2005	21,113	###	no	###	###	###
<i>American Pie Presents: The Naked Mile</i>	2006	20,036	###	no	###	###	###
<i>Rudy</i>	1993	19,569	###	no	###	###	###

APPENDIX D: DATA COLLECTION SHEET

Film Name	Social Network
Clip Start Time (hours: minutes: seconds)	1:00:39
Scene Number	1
AGENT Who is involved in the action? What are their roles?	<p>Cameron Winklevoss is a Caucasian Male in his early 20s, dressed in a black suit, with a white shirt and a green tie. Tyler Winklevoss is the identical twin of Cameron, and he is dressed in a dark blue suit with a light blue button-down shirt and red tie.</p> <p>Larry Summers is a Caucasian male, in his 50s, in a black suit, with a white, button-down shirt and a dark red tie.</p> <p>Anne - An African American female in her 40s, She is dressed in a dark pant-suit.</p>
ACT What happened? What is the action? What is going on? What action; what thoughts?	<p>Summers - "That's their own stupidity. I should have been there. Well, darkness is the absence of light. And the stupidity in that instance was the absence of me. Catherine, I've got students in my office now. Students. Undergrads. Don't know. From the looks of it, they want to sell me a Brooks Brother's franchise. All right." [Summers hangs up phone. Speaking to students] "Good morning."</p> <p>Cameron - "Good morning, sir. I'm Cameron Winklevoss and this is my brother, Tyler."</p> <p>Summers - "And you are here because? [Pause] Either of you can answer."</p> <p>Cameron - "I'm sorry, sir. I thought you were reading the letter."</p> <p>Summers - "I've read the letter."</p> <p>Cameron - "Well, we came up with an idea for a website, called 'Harvard Connection'. We've since changed the name to 'Connect U' and Mark Zuckerberg stole that idea."</p> <p>Summers - "I understand, and I'm asking what you want me to do about it."</p> <p>Cameron - "Well, sir. In the Harvard student handbook which</p>

is distributed to each freshman. Under the heading, standards of conduct in the Harvard community, it says that the College expects all students to be honest and forthcoming in their dealings with members in this community. Students are required to respect public and private ownership and instances of theft, misappropriation and . . .”

Summers – [interrupting] “Anne, punch me in the face. [to Cameron] Go ahead.”

Cameron - “ - Or unauthorized use will result in disciplinary action. Including the requirement of withdrawal from the College.”

Summers - “You memorized that instead of doing what?”

Cameron - “What my brother and I came here today to ask you, respectfully, of course.”

Taylor - “Sir, it’s against university rules to steal from another student. Plain and simple.”

Summers - “You’ve spoken to your housemaster.”

Taylor - “Yes, Sir, and the housemaster made a recommendation to the ad board, but the ad board won’t see it.”

Summers - “Have you tried dealing with the other student directly?”

Taylor - “Mr. Zuckerberg hasn’t been responding to our emails or our phone calls for the last two weeks. He doesn’t answer when we knock on his door at Kirkland, and the closest I came to dealing with him face to face is when I saw him on the quad and chased him through Harvard square.”

Summers - “Chased him?”

Taylor - “I, I, I saw him, and I know he saw me. I went after him, and then he disappeared.”

Summers - “I don’t see this as a University issue.”

Cameron - “Of course, this is a University issue. There’s a code of ethics and an honor code, and he violated them both.”

Summers - "You enter into a code of ethics with the university, not with each other."

Cameron - "I'm sorry, President Summers, but what you just said makes no sense to me at all."

Summers - "I'm devastated by that."

Tyler - "What, what my brother means is if Mark Zuckerberg walked into our dorm room and stole our computer, that would be a University issue."

Summers - "I really don't know. This office doesn't handle petty larceny."

Cameron - "This isn't petty larceny. This idea is potentially worth millions of dollars."

Summers - "Millions?"

Tyler - "Yes."

Summers - "You might just be letting your imaginations run away with you."

Cameron - "Sir, I honestly don't think you're in any position to make that call."

Summers - "I was the U.S. Treasury Secretary. I'm in some position to make that call."

Cameron - "Letting our imaginations run away with us is exactly what we were told to do in your freshman address."

Summers - "Then I would suggest that you let your imaginations run away with you on a new project."

Tyler - "You would?"

Summers - "Yes. Everyone at Harvard is inventing something. Harvard undergraduates believe that inventing a job is better than finding a job. So I'll suggest again that the two of you come up with a new, new project."

Cameron - "I'm, I'm sorry, sir, but that's not the point."

Summers - "Please arrive at the point."

Cameron - "You don't have to be an intellectual property expert to understand the difference between right and wrong."

Summers - "You're saying that I don't."

Cameron - "Of course, I'm not saying that, sir."

Tyler - "I'm saying it."

Summers - "Really?"

Cameron - "Sir . . ."

Summers - "Anne, how did they get this appointment?"

Anne - "Colleagues of their father."

Summers - "Let me tell you something, Mr. Winklevoss, Mr. Winklevoss. Since you're on the subject of right and wrong. This action, this meeting, the two of you being here is wrong. It's not worthy of Harvard. It's not what Harvard saw in you. You don't get special treatment."

Cameron - "We never asked."

Tyler - "Wha . . . Just start another project? . . ."

Summers - "If you have . . ."

Tyler - "Like we're making a diorama for a science fair."

Summers - "If you have a problem with that, Mr. Winklevoss . . ."

Cameron - "We never asked for special treatment."

Summers - "The courts are always at your disposal. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

Tyler - "You can take the Harvard student Handbook and shove it -"

Cameron - [To Tyler] "Ty!" [To Summers.] "Thanks very much for your time." [Tyler and Cameron exit the office.]

AGENCY How do the agents act? By what means do they act?	Summers is pretentious and unfriendly. He repeatedly makes remarks to his secretary that suggests he has no interest or desire to meet with undergraduate students.
SCENE Where is the act happening? What is the Background?	The office of the President of Harvard Law School. In the previous scene, the secretary remarks that the building is 335 years old. The office is filled with antique furniture. There are numerous bookshelves, a grandfather clock. The secretary sits in the office with the President as he meets with the students. There is an oriental rug on the floor. A leather couch and curio cabinet can also be seen in the background.
PURPOSE Why do the agents act? What do they want?	The Winklevoss twins come to see Harvard President, Larry Summers, to ask for help. They believe that an idea of theirs has been stolen and they want Summers to act on their behalf. Summers has no interest in assisting the two.

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE OF CODING WORKSHEET

[AdminMoney]

Mayor – “If you want the homecoming parade in my town, you have to pay.”

WORMER – “I don’t think it is right that you should extort money from the college.”

###

WORMER – “Oh (laughing), well I’m sure I can arrange a nice little honorarium from the student fund. (Laughing).”

###

RICHMOND - “Oh, close . . . Very close, but wrong . . . see, she was a lovely woman and she used to fund our science department. That was before she was hospitalized for nearly swallowing a gerbil.”

###

RICHMOND – “Now listen to me carefully, you fat tub of goo. For years, you’ve singlehandedly alienated every wealthy donor we’ve had. Air conditioning schools are out drawing us. We’ve lost so much money, red is now our new school color. Inner city schools have better computers than we do. Bosnia wants to give us money. Now, I’m going to set-up a meeting with Harlan Hartley. Klump, are you listening to me?”

###

RICHMOND - Hartley is the last rich alumnus we’ve got and he’s a science fan and he’s considering donating a ten million dollar grant to this school and . . . I want that money, Klump. Your job depends upon it. I’ll let you know how to handle this since I’ll be watching you. Now, go.”

###

RICHMOND hands Klump a file that contains a bill for a \$2000 viper rental.

Klump – “Oh . . . ah . . . yeah . . . well, ah . . . uhm, my car is in the shop.”

RICHMOND – “So you put a 47,000 dollar luxury car on your faculty account

###

RICHMOND – “Exactly my point. It’s an outrage that his brilliance has no affiliation with this school. That’s why I found him and brought him to your money . . . attention, brought him to your attention.”

###

RICHMOND Singing. - “We’re in the money . . . Put that food down . . .

###

RICHMOND – “Have you seen professor Klump? He’s forty minutes late for his meeting and if Harlan Hartley walks out that door 10 million dollars goes with him. Oh, lord. I’m going to have to lay down in front of his car.”

###

RICHMOND – “Mr. Love, where the hell have you been? I’ve been nursemaid-ing Hartley 3 years and if I didn’t need that money . . . ”

###

YAGER - No, you’re being moved off campus, the board of regents has decided to terminate your grant. You are to vacate the premises immediately.”

###

YAGER - “Fine. This university will no longer continue any funding of any kind for your groups activities.”

###

Tyler - “This isn’t petty larceny. This idea is potentially worth millions of dollars.”

SUMMERS - “Millions?”

Cameron - “Yes.”

SUMMERS - “You might just be letting your imaginations run away with you.”

Tyler - “Sir, I honestly don’t think you’re in any position to make that call.”

SUMMERS - “I was the U.S. Treasury Secretary. I’m in some position to make that call.”

###

APPENDIX F: UNIQUE DOMAIN ENCODING LABELS AND BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS

ADMINDRESS – The attire of the administrator

ADMINAGE – The age of the administrator

ADMINALUM – Interaction between the administrator and alumnae or alumni

ADMINCARING – An administrator caring for someone else

ADMINCOMMUN – An administrator working with a member of the community

ADMINCRAZY – A reference by a character to an administrator as crazy or insane

ADMINCUSS – An administrator using profanity

ADMINEXPRESSANGER – An administrator expressing anger

ADMINFACDOUBT – An administrator doubting the actions or decisions of a faculty member

ADMINFACFRIENDS – An administrator in a friendship with a faculty member

ADMINFACHELP – An administrator helping a faculty member

ADMINFACHELPLESS – An administrator not helping a faculty member

ADMINFACLESS – An administrator making an academic decision without faculty input

ADMINFACPRAISE – An administrator praising a faculty member

ADMINFACROMANTIC – An administrator involved romantically with a faculty member

ADMINFACTHREAT – An administrator threatening a faculty member

ADMINGEND – The administrator's gender

ADMINGOAL – The administrator's goal

ADMININEPT – An administrator ineptitude

ADMINMARRIAGE – An administrator's marriage

ADMINMIDDLEMAN – An administrator serving as a mediator among constituent groups

ADMINMONEY – An administrator talking about money

ADMINOUTOFTOUCH – An administrator being out of touch

ADMINRACE – An administrator's racial identity

ADMINRECREATE – An administrator participating in recreational activities

ADMINRELISH – An administrator relishing the pain of another

ADMINRULES – An administrator quoting or using rules

ADMINTRIALS – An administrator using a formal process or trial

ADMINSTUD – An administrator interacting with a student

ADMINTITLE – An administrator's title

ADMINUPPITY – An administrator acting pretentious

ADMINWIFE – An administrator's wife

BADNAMES – An administrator being called derogatory names

BUILDING – The building within a film clip

DEANAGGRESS – Aggression toward an administrator

DEANTEACH – An administrator teaching

DÉCOR – The décor within a film clip

DECORWEAPONS – The use of weapons within the décor of a film clip

FACNOFAITH – Faculty expressing no faith in an administrator

GOLF – Mention of golf by an administrator

INSTITUTION – The higher education institution the administrator works for

LOCATION – The location of the action of the film clip

PARENTS – The interaction of an administrator with a student's parents

POSITIVEADMINISTRATORS – Positive leadership qualities shown by an administrator

RESEARCHOVERTEACHING – An administrator favoring research over teaching

SECAGGRESS – An administrator acting angry or aggressively toward a secretary or other subordinate

TIME PERIOD – The time period in which the film clip takes place

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- Zugsmith, A. (Producer & Director). (1960). *Sex kittens go to college* [Motion picture]. United States: Albert Zugsmith Productions.

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ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Florida State College at Jacksonville	Jacksonville, Florida
<i>Instructional Officer</i>	July 2008 to Present
<i>Director of Pre-College Instructional Programs</i>	July 2006 to June 2008
<i>Instructional Officer</i>	Dec. 2003 to June 2006
<i>Director of Forensics</i>	Jan. 1998 to Dec. 2003
The Education and Resource Center of P.P.G.I.	Bettendorf, Iowa
<i>Education Manager</i>	1996 to 1997

COLLEGE TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Florida State College at Jacksonville	Jacksonville, Florida
<i>Adjunct Professor</i>	2004 to Present
<i>Continuing-contract Professor of Speech Communication</i>	1998 to 2003

EDUCATION

University of North Florida	Jacksonville, Florida
Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership, G.P.A. 3.98/ 4.0	Anticipated May 2012
Eastern Illinois University	Charleston, Illinois
Master of Arts - Speech Communication, G.P.A. 4.0 / 4.0	1992
Bachelor of Arts - Theater Arts minor in Speech Communication	1991
Rock Valley College	Rockford, Illinois
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